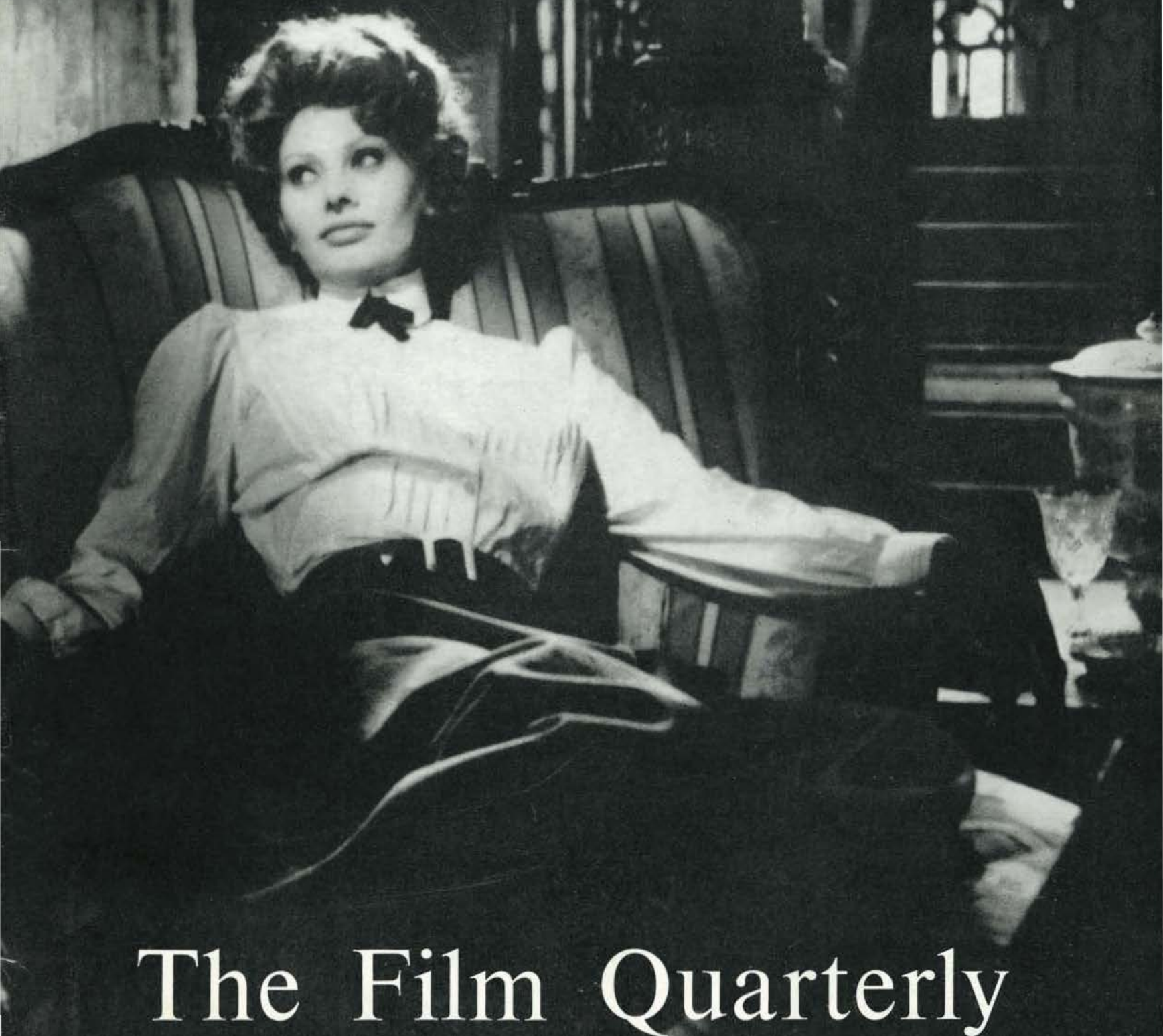


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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 29 No. 3 SUMMER 1960

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"Our Last Spring": Michael Cacoyannis' new film and his first with English dialogue, centres on a consul's family in Athens. Its theme: youth remembered.

Left: Cacoyannis and two of his young cast, Panos Goumas and Jenny Russell, on location.

Below, left: Alexander Mamatis, who plays the leading part, masked for the sequence of carnival.

Below: Alexander Mamatis, Panos Goumas and Jenny Russell.



THE FRONT PAGE

A FEW WEEKS AGO, talking to one of the major figures of the post-war European cinema, we learnt that he was vainly trying to track down the negative of his first film. The company for which it was made no longer exists; the negative—which the director wants to recover for more than sentimental reasons—is not even in his own country. It is sitting in the store rooms of a foreign studio, from which the director cannot easily extract it; and, if he does manage to get it out, he has no idea what its condition may be. “In twenty years time,” he said gloomily, “there probably won’t be a negative of *any* of my films.”

This sort of conversation drives home what we really mean when we talk of the cinema as an ephemeral art. The amazing thing is that so few major works have irrevocably gone, that there are still prizes (such as the recently resurrected Forbes-Robertson *Hamlet*) to be located and rediscovered. But there can be no question at all that the preservation of screen history depends very largely on the work of the film archivists. Companies go bankrupt; films are withdrawn from circulation; few directors have been able to show Chaplin’s tenacity in keeping their work under their own personal control.

In England, the National Film Archive this June celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. Its curator, throughout its existence, has been Ernest Lindgren, and he does not himself know whether it is the oldest of the world’s archives. Certainly in 1938, when the International Federation of Film Archives came into existence, London, Paris, New York and Berlin were all established. Since the war, the foundation of an archive has been one of the first steps taken by any country anxious to assert its cinematic independence. But within the archive movement itself there are all kinds of variations, from the collection which is part of a state cinema, through the government financed but otherwise independent archive (such as our own) to the independent foundation. Archives come in all sizes and a variety of styles: what they have in common is the determination to ensure that not a foot of film worth preserving is surrendered to time.

There is a degree of variation in the interpretation of ‘worth preserving’. The Cinémathèque Française, for instance, concentrates on the cinema as an art; the National Film Archive balances its acquisitions between art and historical record. It has an enormous collection of newsreels; it acts as the official agent for the preservation of government films; it collects scientific material. This, though it marks a fairly fundamental variation in function, is possibly largely a matter of national temperament. Some people in Britain might still question the morality of spending public money on something they are scarcely prepared to admit into their own closed circle of the arts; but these same people would not deny the importance of preserving the contemporary record.

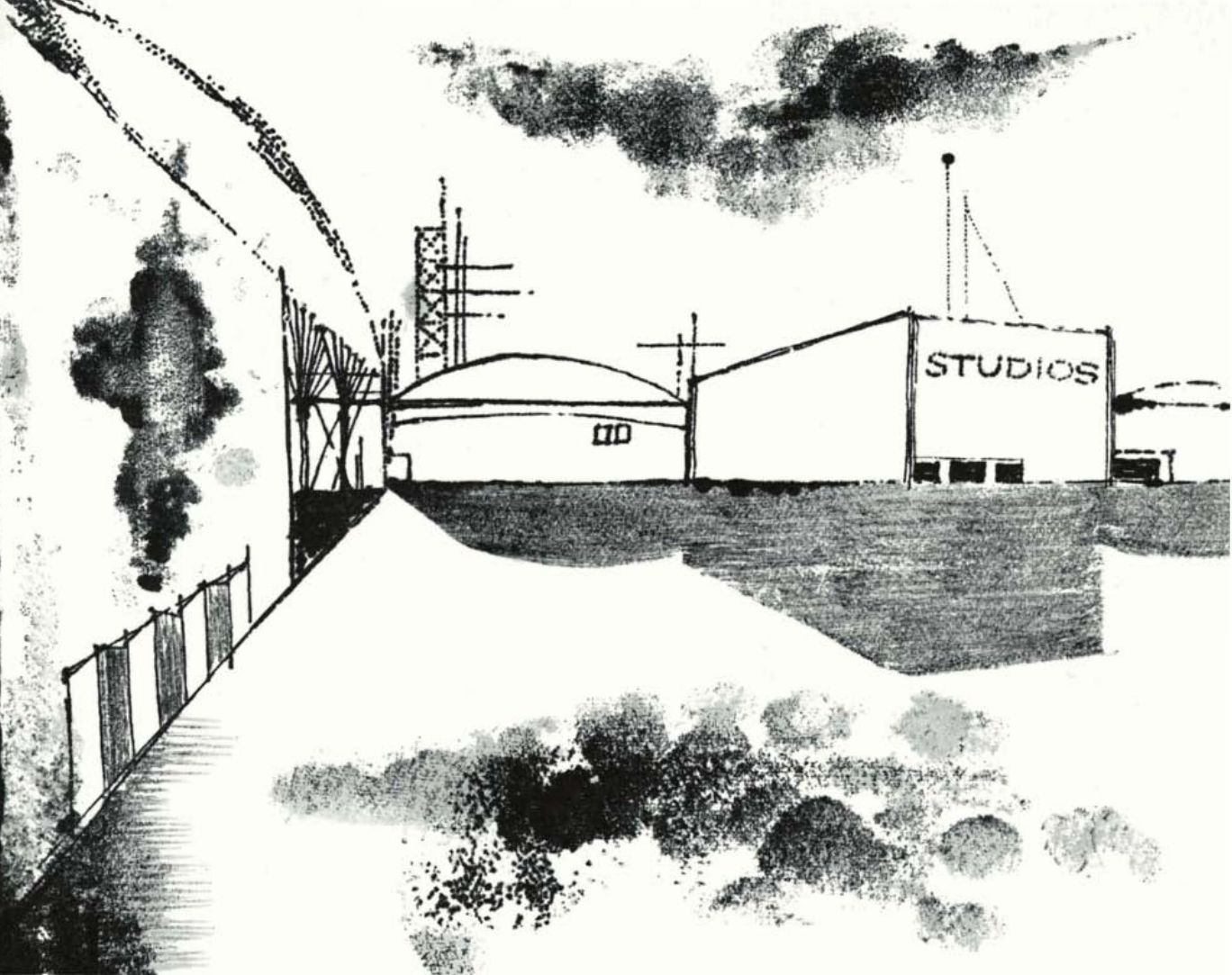
The National Film Archive sees its primary duty as to preserve: to ensure that screen history, and the screen’s contribution to history in the wider sense, survives for the future. It is bound to be somewhat in the position of a picture gallery which can only put a small proportion of its collection on display, since the cost of making duplicate prints is such as to inhibit large-scale duping. In so far as copyright allows, films from the Archive naturally find their outlet in National Film Theatre and film society programmes. Yet these films, by the nature of things, amount to only a fraction of the whole collection. It is rather a formidable thought that the vaults at Aston Clinton are quite extensively occupied by material which must most certainly be kept, but which only the thesis-writer, the researcher into the cinema’s dimmer past, is ever likely to see.

This, though, is the archivist’s almost insoluble dilemma. One way to circumvent it is to create sufficient audience demand and interest to justify the cost of prints; and this, in Britain, is part of the responsibility of the British Film Institute as a whole. Another possibility of wider outlet for the Archive’s films is through technological advance. Already, for instance, it is perfectly practicable, though extremely expensive, to project a film *in negative* via television, so that it could be seen on a London screen without the actual film ever leaving the archive vaults, and without the need to make a print.

The National Film Archive is not just a store-house. Its operations are interlocked with those of the British Film Institute, of which it is both the senior department and, as it were, the corner-stone; and the Archive itself has in any case many other functions. Film cataloguing is a massive operation; a production library service provides stock shot material; the stills library, the information department and book library (lately incorporated administratively into the Archive) and the new job of acquiring television material are all part of a co-ordinated operation. It would be difficult, in any case, to see a film archive as a largely academic institution with a dedication only to the needs of posterity: people dealing with the most contemporary of the arts must work in terms of the present.

The archive movement was the creation of a few dedicated people—Henri Langlois in France, Iris Barry in America, Ernest Lindgren in Britain—who realised that film was infinitely perishable and who perhaps also saw that the recent advance of sound was bound to relegate silent films to those prepared to care for them. Now, twenty-five years later, the great collections are still in need of wider public support. They should have it; and it is chastening enough to wonder, without them, how much of the silent cinema would have survived the thirty years since sound.

AFTER the STRIKE



by PENELOPE HOUSTON

IN THE LAST WEEK of March, 1960, only four directors were working in the Hollywood studios. At Universal-International, the one major company to sign a pre-strike agreement with the Screen Actors Guild, David Miller was directing a comedy for Doris Day's Arwin Productions. Elsewhere, Irving Lerner was making *Studs Lonigan*, from the James Farrell novel; and two directors who might not unreasonably be classed as unknowns, Alexander Singer and Saul Swimmer, were working on modest independent productions. In the same week, while this lonely quartet were keeping Hollywood film production alive, the all-conquering television studios had a total of eighty-four series actively in production. Abroad, in Mexico, Yul Brynner headed the cast of John Sturges' Westernised version of *The Seven Samurai*. In Rhodes, at about the same time, Carl Foreman was receiving the freedom of the island, while press statements celebrated *The Guns of Navarone's* contribution to the Greek economy. In Israel, Otto Preminger built a village in which to house *Exodus*, offered it as a present to the Israeli authorities, and allegedly had his gift politely turned down. In London, Sam Spiegel announced that he had just engaged Mr. Anthony Nutting, former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, to act as production adviser on his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

The actors' strike brought most of Hollywood to a grinding halt. But the fact is that Hollywood, which has so often been described as being less a place than a state of mind, looked in the spring of 1960 less than ever like

the capital of a major industry. It is the Spiegels and the Foremans, the Premingers and Donens, some London-based, some peripatetic, who now make the grand-scale gestures which snatch the headlines. Films are announced (like *The Guns of Navarone*) months or even years before production actually begins; all-star casts are assembled (Stanley Donen has Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr, Jean Simmons and Robert Mitchum for his new comedy; Preminger has Paul Newman, Eva Marie Saint, Ralph Richardson, Sal Mineo, Peter Lawford, John Derek); roads are built, armies hired, location problems ironed out by discussions "at the highest level", so that *Navarone* was preceded by conversations between its producer and Archbishop Makarios. These independents, and a few others like them, are the cinema's new masters, the film-makers without ties. And even the big Hollywood companies, when they plan to spend a lot of money, come to Europe to do it. *Ben-Hur*, like many of the juggernauts, was shot in Italy; Fox's *Cleopatra*, with the much-touted million dollar salary to Elizabeth Taylor, will be filmed here.

An American film, these days, is as likely as not to have been made by an American director and European technicians, from a script by a blacklisted writer unable to put his own name to it, with an American-British-Italian cast, on a location anywhere along the Mediterranean seaboard. The main control of the film industry, the financial power, has never moved from New York. Yet Hollywood, however diminished and debilitated, still imposes its

image. When the actors' strike last March shut down all production at seven major studios, it was still possible to feel, uneasily, that an industry had been halted.

Hollywood on Strike

THE STRIKE OF THE Screen Actors Guild, and the longer and much less publicised strike of the Writers Guild of America, shared the same aims. Briefly, the issue at stake was whether actors and writers (and by inference directors, composers, technicians of all kinds) should receive additional, so-called residual, payments if and when films on which they had worked were sold to television. The showing of features on television, it should be remembered, may in a few years mean something much more extensive than it does now: experiments with Telemeter, or Pay-As-You-View television, are still being carried on, and if this or a similar system comes into operation the actors clearly want firmly to have established their own position and bargaining power.

Details of the strike negotiations, the claims and counter-claims, announcements by both sides that no ground would be yielded, gloomy comments in the Hollywood trade press ("There's a sad and lost look on the faces of many actors these days . . . few have a studio they can call 'home' or wise studio executives they can look to for personal advice, sympathy, guidance") make predictable and not very enlightening reading. The final settlement with the Screen Actors Guild, as in the case of most strikes, was a compromise. After 33 days the actors went back to work, having secured producers' contributions to a pension plan and a health and welfare fund, certain improved conditions and increased salaries (stunt men will get \$100 a day instead of \$90), and an agreement that when films made after January, 1960, are eventually sold to television, the actors will receive 6 per cent. of the receipts after 40 per cent. has been deducted for distribution expenses. Payments to the pension plan look like a negotiated alternative to the demand the actors agreed to surrender: no additional payments will now have to be made when films produced between 1948 and 1960 go to television.

This was Hollywood's first actors' strike, though a threatened walk-out over twenty years ago was only averted at the last moment. This time, the studios could not afford to surrender: too much capital is tied up in those 1948-60 productions. One trade paper editorial, too, disclosed a disagreeable truth of the kind which only comes to light in times of trouble. "Some few pictures," said *The Hollywood Reporter*, "have made big money; the rest, estimated at better than 70 per cent. of the total product, ended up in the red." This is a daunting figure which helps to explain one of the issues in which the negotiations reportedly became bogged down. The producers, it was alleged, were sticking at the demand that the actors should receive a percentage on *all* sales to TV, irrespective of how the balance sheet stood on a particular film. If it is true that 70 per cent. of the total Hollywood product is made at a loss, it would seem difficult to blame them.

Hollywood's first shut-down gave the press some fair copy (no picket lines to photograph, but there was always the cheerful headline "Marilyn Monroe on Strike"), yielded the inevitable "ghost town" comparisons, and produced scarcely less inevitable hints of Left-wing

jiggery-pokery from such staunchly conservative columnists as Hedda Hopper. Ironically, while the Hollywood trade papers reported the negotiations with a kind of resigned phlegmatism, their pages were still packed with those emotional advertisements in which Oscar nominees express their gratitude—and the Oscar celebrations, with *Ben-Hur* collecting its expected load of awards, went on regardless.

Meanwhile, there were other side issues; and it is worth recording the almost casuistical tone of the advice given by the Writers Guild of America to those of its members who might be on strike in their capacity as writers while still working in their capacity as producers. "The writer-producer," *Variety* reported, "may diagnose script problems but not prescribe for them. Taking a theoretical case, the producer finds that a segment of a script is poorly motivated, or a character isn't strong enough, or the plot lags. He may bring it to the studio chief and say this is bad and needs a rewrite. When the studio head asks why it's bad, the producer may diagnose it. But when the studio chief then asks how it can be fixed, the WGA-member producer must draw the line and refuse such services on the basis that they are writing services."

On the whole, though, one gets the impression that the strike was one of the flatter episodes in Hollywood's history, an affair for resignation rather than emotion. Certainly the labour troubles of the 1930's, the struggles for the establishment of the various guilds, were fought out in much more of a do-or-die atmosphere and with a bravado remote from 1960's sober deliberations. It seems almost symbolic that the president of the SAG, Ronald Reagan, has not himself appeared in a film for two or three years, and that comments on the strike, for or against, came largely from the middle-aged among the actors. What began as an "issue of principle" seems to have ended largely on a question of pensions.

It may well be, however, that the larger significance of the strike lies in its revelation of the new shape of Hollywood, the widening gap between the big studios and the independents. Many independents, themselves actors or working film-makers, are bound to take a less established and institutional attitude to such questions as labour disputes. They do not have huge and valuable back-logs of product on which to negotiate TV sales; they have not committed themselves to extensive bank loans on which these pictures stand as security; they do not have money tied up in studio plant and resources; they are less inextricably caught up in the whole industrial process. The independents, living from picture to picture rather than from year to year, have to keep making films for their livelihood. Consequently, they had little to lose in coming to terms with the actors before the strike. The big studios (with the exception of the active 20th Century-Fox, which had to suspend work on four pictures) now find it easier and just as profitable to rent their facilities and to act as distributors for the independents rather than extensively to involve themselves in the risks of production.

The studios, however, have too heavy an investment built up in their own plant to allow the machinery to stand idle. And this, again, is potentially liable to leave them lagging behind in the race for markets. Increasingly, the film-making pattern is one of internationalism, location shooting, co-production. Yet, if a major inducement to the big studios' own productions is to prevent their sound stages from standing idle, they are less likely



Ronald Reagan, his wife and James Cagney, photographed on their way to a Hollywood strike meeting.

to set off around the world. With not a great many exceptions, the average entertainment film produced at the moment in a Hollywood studio looks a bit provincial. The big names of the international entertainment business are elsewhere.

The Case of Private Slovik

INDEPENDENCE IS THE THING; and to be independent, we optimistically write, is to be able to take risks. One risk that still cannot be taken with impunity, however, recently came revealingly to light; and the story of Frank Sinatra's hiring and firing of Albert Maltz is an episode indicative of the limitations of liberalism—as well as of independence.

The background involves a certain amount of old history. Just on eighteen months ago, a crop of press stories announced with unconcealed relief that the blacklist had at last come to its unregretted end. Not long before, the Motion Picture Academy had been badly



caught out over the whole undignified skirmish when it was disclosed that "Robert Rich", winner of an Oscar for the story of *The Brave One*, was in fact the blacklisted and inadmissible Dalton Trumbo. In 1959, it seemed likely that an even more awkward situation was going to arise. The script of *The Defiant Ones*, nominated for an Oscar, was the work of Nathan Douglas (ineligible since he had pleaded the Fifth Amendment under his real name of Nedrick Young) and Harold Smith, a writer with a "clear" record. Obviously it would be unfair, if not impossible, to snatch the prize away from the blameless Mr. Smith; equally obviously, the Academy's firm ruling barred Mr. Douglas from receiving his share of the award. After some debate, the Academy decided to rescind its own ruling and to recognise all writers as eligible for its awards.

"The formal end of the Hollywood blacklist," declared *Time*. "For barred writers, the informal end came long ago. At least 15 per cent. of current Hollywood films are reportedly written by blacklist members." It certainly appeared that the whole era of pseudonym and subterfuge might at last be over. It had begun in 1947, with the initial case of the "Hollywood Ten"; new names had been added every year until 1953, by which time an estimated 150 writers were concerned. Carl Foreman, now a producer on the grandest scale, was unable as late as 1957 to sign his own name to a script. Dalton Trumbo and Albert Maltz, two of the original "Ten", had received no screen credits since serving their gaol sentences. Other writers had been unable to sign their names to their work for ten years or more—or, say, a quarter of their entire productive lives.

It looked, though, as if screen credits might now again read honestly. It was widely rumoured that Dalton Trumbo had been working, uncredited, on *Spartacus*; and, early this year, Otto Preminger announced that he had engaged him to script *Exodus*, with full credit. Mr. Preminger, however much advertising capital he may make out of his recurrent brushes with the censors, has never been accused of lack of nerve or confidence. Sam Spiegel, when he gave a London press conference to announce his Lawrence film, was distinctly reticent when questioned about his scriptwriter. Later, it was rumoured that the writer would in fact be Michael Wilson, another figure out of the ten-year shadows. Then Frank Sinatra, one of Hollywood's few surviving natural rebels, announced that he had invited Albert Maltz to write the script of *The Execution of Private Slovik* for him.

It took some courage to make this announcement, considering that there might well have been no outcry if the business had been kept quiet, the writer's identity submerged beneath one of those discreet pseudonyms which have masked so many controversial credits. Sinatra, however, was not just another producer, nor was *Private Slovik* just another film. The actor, a favourite target for the gossip writers at the best of times, had adapted his *High Hopes* to serve as Senator Kennedy's campaign song, which somehow managed to drag the Presidential election into the whole hubbub. And *The Execution of Private Slovik*, which will tell the story of the only American soldier shot for desertion during the war, was bound to be an extravagantly controversial film.

Frank Sinatra, with Robert Wagner and Natalie Wood, on the set of "Can-Can".

"What a picnic 'Tenner' Maltz will have writing that unAmerican *Slovik* script," said *The Hollywood Reporter's* columnist on March 24th. Next day, the attack was more exacerbated and more viciously phrased. Maltz was a "fink" (strike-breaker); he was, in fact, "the biggest fink in town," because, being no longer a member of the Writers Guild, he had accepted the *Private Slovik* assignment at a time when other writers were out on strike. The usual pressures were exerted from the usual quarters: columnists, ex-service organisations, the professional right-wingers. On March 28th, Frank Sinatra took a full page in the trade papers in order to make a statement. Headed in bold black type, it declared: "I am concerned that the screenplay reflects the true pro-American virtues of the story . . . I spoke to many screenwriters but it was not until I talked to Albert Maltz that I found a writer who saw the screenplay in exactly the terms I wanted. That is, the Army was right. As the producer of the film, I and I alone will be responsible for it . . ."

Sinatra's second statement, made just a fortnight later, seems to demand quotation in full:

"In view of the reaction of my family, my friends and the American public, I have instructed my attorneys to make a settlement with Albert Maltz and to inform him that he will not write the screenplay for *The Execution of Private Slovik*. I had thought the major consideration was whether or not the resulting script would be in the best interests of the United States. Since my conversations with Mr. Maltz had indicated that he has an affirmative, pro-American approach to the story, and since I felt fully capable as producer of enforcing such standards, I have defended my hiring of Mr. Maltz. But the American public has indicated it feels the morality of hiring Albert Maltz is the more crucial matter, and I will accept this majority opinion."



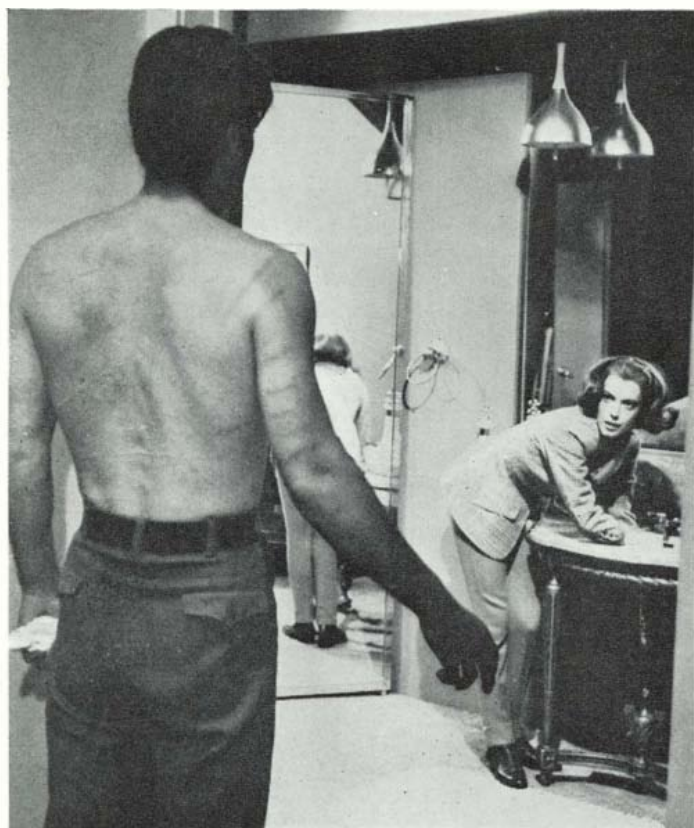
Innocence: a scene from "Hound Dog Man".

So, it seems, the blacklist is still with us, the headlines of eighteen months ago were premature, and conformism has scored another victory. Conformism, it should be remembered, going hand in hand with hypocrisy. Producers have for years been using blacklisted writers—Mr. Maltz, it is widely believed, among them. It is the morality of naming the writers that is partly the point at issue.

Sustaining the Image

BOTH THE STRIKE AND the Maltz affair have earned Hollywood some unwelcome publicity. (The Right, naturally, sees the *Private Slovik* case as another instance of red infiltration narrowly averted; the Left as liberal powerlessness before the forces of prejudice.) Hollywood, always much concerned with the state of its own public image, is equally aware that a whole trend of recent filmmaking, the post-Peyton Place or "Let's see what the public will make of that" sensationalism, has done it no particular good. There is a note almost of relief in reports that an early "sleeper" of 1960 is Fox's *A Dog of Flanders*, the most innocent imaginable story about a child, a dog and a slight case of cruelty to animals, all wrapped up in photogenic Dutch landscapes. A good many of those concerned with sustaining Hollywood's image would probably prefer to see more pictures like *A Dog of Flanders* and *Hound Dog Man* and fewer like *The Bramble Bush* or *All the Fine Young Cannibals*.

One can't help speculating, occasionally, about what some of the stereotypes out of that safe, innocent, all's-right-with-the-world Hollywood of twenty-odd years ago would have made of their 1960 equivalents. Would Judge Hardy have enjoyed giving one of his straight talks to the erring juveniles and more bizarrely errant parents of *A Summer Place* or *Blue Jeans*? How would those small towns, which used to be so shocked when Irene Dunne wrote a novel or Katharine Hepburn went to the ball in a home-made dress, react to the routine of rape and



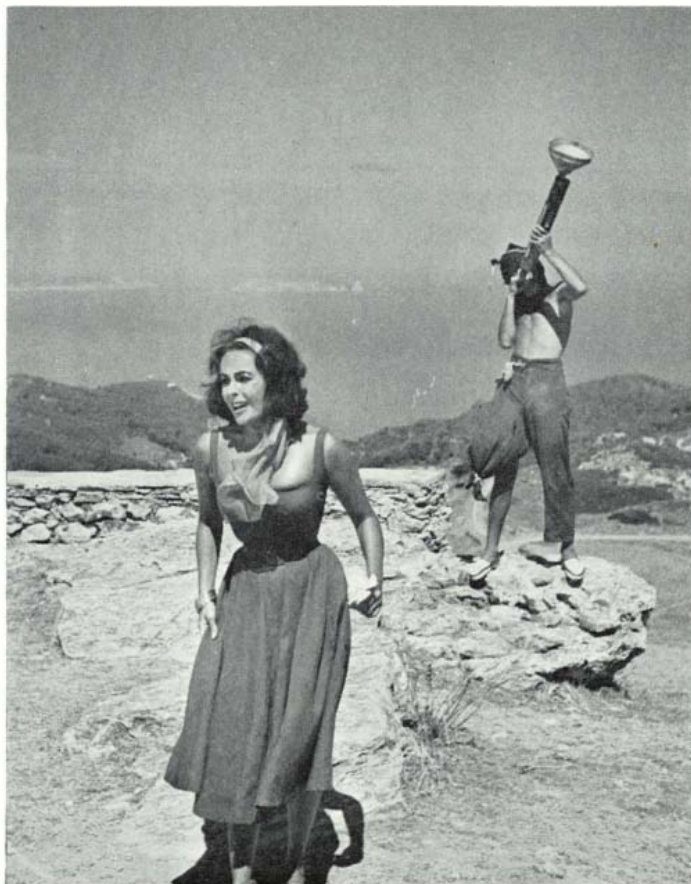
Experience: whip cuts and razor-slashed wrists in "All the Fine Young Cannibals".

murder, drug-taking and abortion, which now pre-occupies their inhabitants? What would Dr. Kildare make of the practitioner in *The Bramble Bush* and the complications of euthanasia, alcohol and adultery in which he becomes involved?

A few years ago we were labelling films in this tradition of self-hatred, with all their guilt complexes worn on the surface, as hysterical. Now the hysteria, if that is the word for it, has been deftly commercialised. We all know the short-hand: alcoholism means an unhappy childhood; to be successful is, in some direction, to be frustrated; New York is wicked, but small towns are wicked; and so on, through a whole range of best-seller adaptations.

The trouble with these pictures is not that they are shocking but that they are boring. And, in this context, it is worth taking a brief look at a film highly relevant in that it could scarcely have been made for the ordinary commercial cinema at any previous time, considerably more respectable in its credentials than most, and typical of the new American cinema in that its direct connections with Hollywood are of the slightest. Joseph Mankiewicz directed *Suddenly, Last Summer* in Britain last year. He employed a British cameraman, Jack Hildyard; he brought over all the leading members of his cast from the United States; he employed Oliver Messel to create, on the lot at Shepperton, the luxuriant fantasy world of Sebastian Venable's garden, with its fly-trap plants and festoons of fleshy vegetation.

Suddenly, Last Summer is an American film, technically British, and with an international pedigree; American, that is, in the sense that its extraordinary artificialities are luxuries in which only the American cinema can afford to deal so extravagantly. As half of a stage double bill, one



may imagine Tennessee Williams' hot-house fantasies of insanity, homosexuality, possessive mother domination and cannibalism administering a short, sharp Grand Guignolish shock. But the film is never short, almost everything in it seeming to happen twice, and although it steps gingerly round the forbidden words, its hints are more wordily explicit than most statements. One episode—the flashback revelation of what really happened to Sebastian on that summer afternoon in Spain—is surprisingly terse and carries its imaginative charge. The playing is dogged (Montgomery Clift), arrestingly mannered (Katharine Hepburn) and courageously whole-hearted (Elizabeth Taylor). But the work itself remains a sickly fantasy; and Tennessee Williams' response to his own steam-heated jungle of corruption now seems so whole-hearted as to choke off reaction in the audience. Well, one finds oneself saying, of course Catherine got a shock when she saw the Spanish boys demolishing and devouring her cousin; but after all, she's not a Tennessee Williams heroine for nothing—and what is one shock among so many.

Increasingly, the writer seems to retreat from the crudities of life into the cruelties of fantasy. Mankiewicz' film, which tries to provide a certain anchorage in reality (mental hospital settings; Southern small town cross-currents), cannot move it very far from the Shepperton studio. And, if the Tennessee Williams film seems rather an extreme example, it is still closely related to a contemporary trend. It is part of a move towards greater and greater extravagance of subject, in which all the shock cards—from a session in a ward for the hopelessly insane to a gloatingly side-long approach to a brain surgery operation; from the mild torture of a cigarette stubbed out on a bare hand to the scene of cannibalism on the cliff-top—are dealt face upwards.

Suddenly, Last Summer is likely to be a success, since it panders to the public taste for horror, and at the same time has all the connotations of literary quality and star performance which most horror pictures have to forego. If it is successful, it will most probably be imitated. . . .

* * *

A LABOUR DISPUTE; an argument over a writer; a film which was not even made in Hollywood: they all help to construct a picture of the American cinema as it looks at present. And one significant thing is that these three happenings are all strictly of the moment. During the strike, work had actually to be halted on only eight productions, while film industry money continued to be invested in picture-making around the world. It is only in the last year or so that a stoppage could have brought about such relatively mild dislocation. Equally, the decision to test the blacklist rather than submit to it reflects a new temper, as does the making of a film which would have aroused all kinds of censorship protests even a couple of years ago.

It is only, of course, a fragmented picture; but then the American cinema, with the decline of its big empires, has begun to look like a shifting kaleidoscope of fragments. The interesting development, over the next few years, will be to watch how the pieces are picked up and put together again.

"*Suddenly, Last Summer*": Elizabeth Taylor.

THE DEAD HAND

WALTER LASSALLY

The British cinema has recently been moving towards greater independence, a freer hand for the enterprising producer and a wider range of subject. A young artist here, though, would still encounter enormous problems in trying to make the "nouvelle vague" type of film, produced very cheaply, with total independence, and outside the traditional system. Walter Lassally, whose experience as a cameraman ranges from British documentaries and features to Michael Cacoyannis' A Girl in Black and the Pakistani feature Day Shall Dawn, here considers some issues of independence.

IN THE SPRING OF last year I was approached by a young American playwright to shoot his first feature film in Britain. Norman Vane had written several plays, such as *Harbour Lights*, produced on Broadway in 1956, and *The Deserters*, currently touring Britain in repertory, but was quite innocent of any knowledge of the British film industry from the inside. The story of the projected film appealed to me: it was basically a love story between a young girl and a hunch-backed boy, set against the puritanical religious background of a Nova Scotia fishing community; its main cast numbered five and its only sets were a bedroom, a café and the interior of a small cabin cruiser. It was neither highfalutin in tone nor lacking in action and drama. In short, it seemed to be a good bet for a small-scale production.

The author had about £5,000 backers' money available to him, but was informed that this would not be enough for a production, even outside the system. At that time, he was reluctant to go within the system since he felt it unlikely that he would be able to retain control over the subject or to direct it himself. While the search for an additional £5,000 proceeded, I approached the technicians' union and asked how they would view an attempt to make such a film outside the system, with a small unit and in Ireland. I was informed that the union had just spent a considerable sum of money to get organised in Ireland and that they considered it part of their territory. Accordingly, they would resent, and probably resist, any endeavour to make a film there which did not conform to their rules.

When the National Film Finance Corporation was approached for a loan, its spokesmen declared themselves willing

to put up the remaining £10,000 on a total budget of £15,000, but were dubious as to whether £15,000 represented an adequate budget for the production. They also insisted on a Completion Guarantee—a form of insurance that the film will be completed, whatever the circumstances, so that the investors will not be left in the lurch. A film accountant was found to go over the budget, and this now rose to £17,500. The Completion Guarantors were willing to co-operate, provided a producer with experience in this type of film was engaged, and one was approached on the basis of a list they supplied. Neither the NFFC, nor a distributor who was approached, were now anxious to go ahead on the higher budget, however; and when this was once again revised, with the addition of all legal and financial charges which an outside-the-system production might have dispensed with, it rose again, this time to £19,200. It should be explained here, incidentally, that since most of the financial and insurance charges are worked out on a percentage of the total budget, the addition of a single item to the direct cost (such as an extra electrician or an extra day on location) raises the whole budget by a sizeable sum.

Mr. Vane's inclination at this point was to raise as much money as he could on top of his original £5,000 and to proceed with the picture outside-the-system in Ireland, intending to bring back on this money at least all the visuals and then to find further finance for the post-synchronisation and editing on the basis of this material. He was warned, however, that (a) no union shop would agree to post-synch material for which a "guide track" had not been shot on location by union technicians; (b) that distributors might be very wary of taking his film, however well it turned out, since it would have to compete on their lists with productions in which they had money invested and which would therefore receive preferential treatment; and (c) that it was doubtful whether the film would count for British quota.

In view of all this, the backers felt that an outside-the-system production would be too great a risk, and no more money could be raised. The film was thus thrown back into the system; and finally a distributor was found who was willing to provide 70 per cent. of the finance on a £20,000 budget. Working with the producer who had been recommended to him, Mr. Vane proceeded to make his film. (My own involvement, incidentally, had ended before this point, as I was by this time working on another project.) He had a four week location and a two week studio schedule; he was allowed a free hand with casting and found two very good youngsters to play the main parts. When shooting had been proceeding for a week, a telegram arrived from the union permitting him to direct the film. The agreed schedule proved inadequate, however, and he found himself forced to shoot plot material predominantly, at the expense of atmosphere. Only by claiming that he was shooting title backgrounds, for instance, was he able to get a long-shot of the location town.

At the end of his six weeks, Norman Vane had all the vital plot material in the can; and fortunately much of the location shooting was intrinsically atmospheric. But he was already £200 over budget and was forced to halt. He cut his material to a 90-minute version and showed it to the distributor. "Too long," they said, "it won't hold." This is a phrase which still rings in his ears, as he heard it incessantly in the cutting room and the viewing theatre. Little by little, he was compelled to concentrate his film on "plot". When they finally insisted on making it into a 65-minute second feature, he walked out. Second features are in great demand by the cinemas and also get what amounts to double "Eady Money", the subsidy made



Richard Attenborough and Donald Houston in "The Man Upstairs", one of the few small-scale British productions of recent years which has risked originality. The film's press was very good; its box-office returns, reportedly, were not.

to producers by way of the British Film Production Fund. A highly sentimental music score was fitted to the film, although the director protested, and it was then delivered to the distributor. It is called *Conscience Bay* and it can soon be seen making its way round the cinemas of Britain.

What is left of the original idea? Some fine location work, a charming and a capable performance on the part of the two leads, and the bones of a plot which was once firmly rooted in its locale but which now takes place, rather confusingly, in a virtual vacuum. Some of the scenes considered the best by the director have been cut. They "wouldn't hold". Some scenes, which he thought the worst acted, and had seen fit to remove without injuring the story-line, have been put back. In short, a sorry sort of compromise, which will now perforce be sat through by the audience in the same state of semi-conscious torpor in which most second features are viewed. Will the investors get their money back? Probably . . .

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I have not cited the example of Mr. Vane because I have any axe to grind on his behalf, and I don't want to seem to be putting the claims of his film too high, or to suggest that all the right was on his side. But the history of *Conscience Bay* is a characteristic one; and there is a lesson here—many a lesson.

For years now I have been closely involved with the often heartbreaking attempts of fresh young artists to begin working in the film medium. What in fact has happened is that these artists are no longer quite so fresh and certainly no longer quite so young. Anthony Simmons, the director of *Bow Bells* and *Sunday by the Sea*, both highly praised, and prized, short films, has mainly worked on sponsored documentaries and TV commercials after spending two years trying to set up the feature project that was close to his heart. Gavin Lambert found his interesting, independently financed first attempt at a feature, *Another Sky*, virtually unsaleable in this country and went to the United States, where he has recently scripted *Sons and Lovers*. Lorenza Mazzetti, whose distinctive talent is apparent in *Together*, left England for her native Italy after unsuccessfully trying to get an excellent story about Teddy

boys financed in this country. The censor said at the time that he would object to any treatment of the subject which did not condemn them. Lindsay Anderson, who co-directed the Academy Award-winning *Thursday's Children* and whose *Every Day Except Christmas* earned Britain a Golden Lion at Venice in 1957, is now working in the theatre after the failure of many an attempt at realising a feature film project. And should it be thought that, as a result of *Room at the Top* and subsequent developments, the climate has miraculously changed, there is the highly topical example already quoted. Mr. Vane himself, incidentally, is turning his latest subject, a story of the Chelsea set, into a play . . .

It goes almost without saying that I fervently hope *The Entertainer* and *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* will prove forerunners of a healthy new movement. But if I had to summarise in one phrase what a potential British new wave would be up against, I should say: the Dead Hand. The Dead Hand of apathy, of complacency and convention, whose grip is felt on all sides of the industry. In distribution it is manifest in the assumption that only what has been successful in the past can be so now and in the rigid compartmentalisation into first, second and co-features, each with its strict formula for casting, budget and schedule. In finance it is manifest in the attitude that films are a product not so different from sausages and in the rigidity of its system, which makes it very difficult for really independently financed films (such as many of the French *nouvelle vague* productions) ever to reach the screens of this country. In production it is manifest in the attitude of the majority of technicians, in their obsession with "professionalism", in their suspicion of any director entering the medium from "outside" (i.e. from the theatre or novels), and in certain inflexible attitudes of the union, which still sometimes clings tenaciously to the past. It is apparent in the reluctance to shoot on location and the inability to do so without the paraphernalia associated with a large unit; in the emphasis on polish, on strict continuity, on smooth cutting and cold, glamorous camerawork at the expense of invention, of spontaneity. Mr. Vane, for example, had to cut a shot just because the letters R.A.C. appeared in tiny print on the side of a vehicle instead of R.C.A.C.

Perhaps the most serious manifestation, though, lies in the current exaggerated emphasis on pace, sometimes at the expense of atmosphere, poetry and emotional involvement. This relatively new vice in British films was referred to in the review of *The Angry Silence* in the last issue of SIGHT AND SOUND. Almost to a man, British film editors now insist on creating artificially whipped-up pace in the erroneous belief that audiences will somehow be bored by a slower moving story. Of course, many films are so bad that the sooner they are over the better for everyone; but a good film will always be able to hold its audience by involving it emotionally, and the pace should arise naturally out of the mood of the story. How would *L'Atalante* or *Pather Panchali* look if they were edited according to the current British practice?

John Osborne and Tony Richardson, writing some months ago to *The Sunday Times* about an article called "The Cinema Tycoons", commented: "We believe that the best way to make adult films is to give the maximum of independence to those immediately, creatively concerned. Both the belief and practice of many film producers in England is in entrenched opposition to this approach." ". . . Very few people," they sadly added, "can be persuaded to make uncompromising films on small budgets."

No one who has not actually worked in the studios will be able to realise how deeply ingrained is the attitude of the

Dead Hand, how every attempt to breathe vitality into a film is apt to be met by the conventional objections: It won't cut; it won't match; it won't hold. How often one hears these reiterated phrases from people who hold professionalism dear, but whose rigid adherence to set formulae of doubtful validity might suggest that they are not acquainted with many of the masterpieces of the cinema.

3

Cavalcanti, writing in *Film Monthly Review* eleven years ago, said: "The big films made since the end of the war are the reflection of a tired world—their themes lacking courage, their technique lacking imagination, their treatment lacking poetry. Our films are made by contract. To make a film is no longer an artistic adventure. There is no longer any experiment, even in the documentaries. There is no opportunity for youth." Lamentably, this is not a great deal less true now than it was then. Britain lacks enterprising producer-impresarios, men who have a nose for talent, an ability to select people who will work well together and stimulate one another, and a capacity to act as a bridge between the artist and the financier. Two such impresarios existed in Britain just after the war. One is dead; the other is no longer a film producer.

No one blames producers for being cautious or investors for wanting to recoup their investments; but films are not just "made by contract" and one of their essential ingredients is ideas. One film of the calibre of *Citizen Kane* brings in enough new ideas to keep the run-of-the mill productions rolling for some years; and to neglect one's most essential raw material is surely a foolish policy in any business. A film industry that is run by accountants on efficiency expert lines is like a bakery that forewears the use of dough.

Many people in the trade suspect that the writers of SIGHT AND SOUND would like to force highbrow films down the

reluctant throats of an unwilling public. This is as ridiculous as it is impossible. Speaking personally, I do not even believe that the raising of standards of audience taste is something which can be accomplished on a mass level. But it is intolerable that a handful of people in the distributors' offices should be the arbiters of public taste, when they have been proved wrong so often, having been guilty of so many misjudgments, and when they are so reluctant to give the public a real choice. Distributors might consider the financial success of the *nouvelle vague* in France, where backers have realised that if only one film out of six cheaply made hits the financial jackpot, they are still a good deal better off than if the one expensive picture they might have made with the same money shows itself a dead loss.

In the long run it is ideas rather than gimmicks that are needed; and before ideas can get a foothold the Dead Hand must be lifted. Let films be any length within reason and programmes be based on intelligent juxtaposition and elementary mathematics. If we must have double feature programmes, then at least let the second feature field be a training ground in which new directors and writers are really given a chance and in which the limitations of length and budget act as a healthy discipline, not a millstone as at present. Let technicians admit that to experiment is to be alive and that to play safe means ultimate death to the medium. Let the union diehards realise that to stipulate a four man crew for a piece of apparatus which an intelligent fifteen-year-old could handle is to invite ridicule and contempt. In short, let there be fewer formulae and more invention, fewer rules and more give-and-take. No film-making robot has yet been invented, and heaven help us when it is. Only the living spirit of new ideas can rescue the industry from the dead grip of past conventions: face this one truth, and the way is free for a British new wave to roll in, clean, fresh and salty.

Rosemary Anderson and John Bown in "Conscience Bay".





"Les Jeux de l'Amour": a scene from Philippe de Broca's first film, a comedy of two men and a girl.



Questions of Censorship

DEREK HILL writes: Lord Morrison of Lambeth, the new President of the British Board of Film Censors, once parried a question in the House of Commons on the Board's set up and method of operation. "I freely admit," he said, "that this is a curious arrangement, but the British have a curious habit of making curious arrangements work." The "curious arrangement", despite our censor's much-publicised new liberalism, currently cuts about 300 of 550 features annually submitted. But it is the eight or so films refused a certificate each year which attract the most attention, and which seem to have prompted eagerness for a conference between the Board and local licensing authorities, who are divided as to whether the Board is too conservative—particularly over politically propagandist films—or too lax. Lord Morrison, the second former Home Secretary to be appointed President, may be in an odd position if the conference takes place, for he is also President of the Association of Municipal Corporations, one of the two bodies which have pressed for such a meeting.

Meanwhile, predictions about the likely result of the opening of the first of the Gala Film Theatre Clubs, introduced by John Trevelyan, Secretary of the Board, as a boon to adult audiences, seem not to have been misplaced. Gala now runs club shows at four London cinemas and the scheme is shortly to be established throughout key cities in the provinces. But unfamiliar films so far shown

would seem likely to turn up in public presentations with little or no interference from the Board. A flogging in *Joyhouse of Yokohama*, a bare bosom in *I Spit on Your Graves*, may disappear, but as the films themselves are expendable Gala's service here seems doubtful. Of all the films shown or scheduled at the time of writing, only *The Wild One* and Astruc's *Une Vie* seem really to justify the club provision.

Within a few weeks of Gala's initial announcement, the formation of the Arts Theatre Film Society was advertised: "The aim . . . is to show a selection of ADULT FILMS of artistic quality, some of which have not been passed by THE BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS." The Society, operating on 16mm. in an Acton hotel, opened—inevitably—with *The Wild One* before passing on to *Mamselle Strip-tease* and *Femmes de Paris*.

Latest developments also include the introduction of films into at least two Soho striptease clubs, while a third is said to be selling its patrons films of the show, complete with a viewer, on the way out. Plans are rumoured for the opening, in a Soho basement, of the first all-club cinema; where, allegedly, experiments may be made with the "glamour" films currently enjoying a boom among home movie enthusiasts.

On the other hand, a club which puts a different interpretation on "adult cinema" has opened at the State Cinema, Leytonstone, which for some time has been building up regular and enthusiastic audiences with the most remarkable double-bill programmes in London (*Les Amants* and *Quiet Flows the Don*; *Los Olvidados* and *The Girl Rosemarie*). Recently it opened its own film society with *Symphonie Pastorale*, which it is said may soon be withdrawn from distribution. *Miracolo a Milano* has also been given a club showing. Future plans are still uncertain, though they may include the pick of Gala's club shows.

As Others See Us

DAVID ROBINSON writes: Last October's British Film Week in Moscow provoked a perceptive article on the British cinema in a recent issue of the Soviet journal *Iskusstvo Kino*. The writer, Mme. M. Turovskaja, discusses at some length recent trends in literature and drama, mentioning specifically such works as *Look Back in Anger*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Room at the Top*, *Lucky Jim*. Although she assumes more cohesion than actually exists in the revolt against "bourgeois illusions", her assessment of the significance of these works seems very just: her title, "Questions without Answers", points neatly to the common situation in which the writers of the "angry" generation find themselves.

"Contemporary life and its questions, anxious and sharp as the cries of a saxophone, have entered English literature and drama." But . . . "it may seem strange that the cinema lags behind literature and even the theatre." She makes it clear that "the word 'contemporary' does not mean simply that the action takes place in our own day". *Genevieve*, for instance, is not for Madame Turovskaja a "contemporary" film: she acknowledges it as a pleasant comedy, in a characteristic English tradition, but "you don't find in it anything that you can really call 'contemporary character'".

The one film which above all struck her as being completely and in its own right on the same level of urgency as the new literature and the new drama was the documentary *Momma Don't Allow*. "This film does not prettify or conceal anything. It only shows. But if you need a graphic, everyday image of that attitude to all the old bourgeois illusions and conventions which Osborne's hero angrily proclaims and Kingsley Amis's hero gaily expresses, then here it is."

She had no hesitation in preferring this film far above the others she saw in the same programme of shorts—films which might be expected to appeal more immediately to a Soviet critic, such as *The Door in the Wall* and *A Short Vision* (whose title was unhappily translated literally into Russian as *Nearsightedness*). By comparison, *Woman in a Dressing Gown* and *The Horse's Mouth* struck her as considerably less relevant to contemporary reality, although she admired both films and even accorded the latter the compliment that: "The young unemployed painters who help Gulley Jimson with his great fresco might be taken for distant relations of the heroes of the documentary *Momma Don't Allow*."

Mme. Turovskaja devotes the major part of her article, however, to *Room at the Top*. Her four-page analysis of the film is amazingly acute. She discusses its merits and demerits, complaining, for instance, that the atmosphere of Warnley is not strongly enough evoked; and her conclusion is at once just and generous: "There is much that is unworthy in the film—more, perhaps, than there are merits. But here, for the first time in recent years, the English cinema seriously approaches a social theme and a contemporary hero."

Scripting "Sons and Lovers"

JERRY WALD writes: After having admired D. H. Lawrence's great novel *Sons and Lovers* for many years, and after thinking about its film potentialities for a long while, I finally managed to acquire the motion picture rights in 1954 from Mrs. Lawrence. There ensued a correspondence between Frieda Lawrence and myself that was illuminating and helpful to us in preparing the screenplay; for, as she wrote me in one letter, "I read *Sons and Lovers* word by word as he wrote it about forty or more years ago."

Also in this first letter, dated March 30th, she wrote: "Of course, I am just as anxious as you are to have a good Lawrence movie. Did you see *The Rocking Horse Winner*? It was good except for the last few minutes, when they altered it to give it that false moral touch. That will be the difficulty, to get Lawrence's special quality over, and most movies are according to a pattern . . . It won't be easy, but a new, fresh approach would do it, I believe." This was a common refrain in Mrs. Lawrence's letters: the difficulty of getting Lawrence's special quality on the screen.

Frieda spent some time in Hollywood, although this was before my purchase of the rights to *Sons and Lovers*. In one of her letters, she reminisced: "When I was in Hollywood some time ago John Ford and my friend Dudley Nichols would let me watch when they were shooting on the lot. I enjoyed that very much, all that goes on. Maybe you would let me watch, when you do *Sons and Lovers*. I would not put my oar in."

In a letter dated February 10th, 1955, Frieda wrote a brief but vivid analysis of the leading characters of Lawrence's book, of how they should seem on the screen. "Wouldn't it pay to make the movie somewhat rough for a change, where it does not matter that every hair is in its right place? Paul and the mother will be most important. Paul will have to be fresh with quick movements, and yet you must feel an intensity in him, at times a sense of power. The mother had charm, the charm of an older woman, in spite of her stern standards, with her terrific gift for devotion, but not slavishly so . . . The father must be a man but not a brute; he could be gentle, too. Lawrence said later he had not been fair to his father, and he had not been. I don't absolutely believe in the Oedipus complex. I think Lawrence would have loved that woman whoever she was. Miriam is a pretty, dreamy girl, a sort of Jane Eyre, and the farm and the setting of the family is very important to the young love affair. But the mother was the better horse of the two."

By March, 1956, we had completed a first draft screenplay, which I sent on to Frieda Lawrence to read. She wrote back: "Thank you very much for sending it to me. I have read all of *Sons and Lovers* and like it very, very much. The father is very good and the atmosphere of the miner background is there . . . Lawrence told me about the kitchen at home, it had red calico curtains, and must have had charm. He also told me about how the miners had fun down the pit, they had a donkey there and fed him when they had their own lunch."

"Lawrence also said many years after he had written *Sons and Lovers* that he had not been fair to the father. When the father was with us he would take his plate on his knees to eat and Lawrence would say to him severely: 'Father, don't do that', but I told him: 'Let him do as he likes'. I could tell the children had tried to civilise the father. Lawrence had inherited a lot from his father, that helped to make him a writer. I remember the rough, wounded hands of the father, when he presented me with a bunch of lilies of the valley that



New headquarters: 81 Dean Street, to which the British Film Institute moved last May. Designed by Fitzroy Robinson and Partners, Chartered Architects; photograph by Thomas Picton.

he had gathered at six in the morning. 'These are for you, lass'."

We did not correspond any further and, in 1957, Frieda Lawrence died. For various reasons, the production of the film was delayed. I had started the project at Columbia, but managed when I left there to bring it along to 20th Century-Fox. In the meantime, the young actor whom we originally intended to play Paul, Montgomery Clift, grew too old, and we had to find a new Paul. The script, also, was entirely re-written by Gavin Lambert and T.E.B. Clarke, bringing it even closer to the novel. If Frieda was pleased with our first draft, I'm sure she would have been delighted with the final one . . .

Work in Britain

ANTHONY ASQUITH: Shaw's *The Millionairess*, in CinemaScope and Eastman Colour, with Sophia Loren, Peter Sellers, Alastair Sim and Vittorio de Sica. A Fox-Anatole de Grunwald production; shooting at M-G-M's Elstree Studios.

STANLEY DONEN: *The Grass is Greener*, from the St. Martin's Theatre comedy by Hugh and Margaret Williams. A Grandon Production in Technirama and Technicolor, with Cary Grant, Deborah Kerr, Robert Mitchum and Jean Simmons.

EDMOND T. GREVILLE: Following *Beat Girl*, the French director who made *Remous* 30 years ago now keeps the Horror Wave rolling with a re-make of *Hands of Orlac*, starring Mel Ferrer in Conrad Veidt's old role of a homicidal, hand-less concert pianist; made on location in Cannes ("with important sequences during the Festival") by Steven Pallos's Britannia Productions, for British Lion release. Other current horrors: *Konga*, with Michael Gough and a King Kong chimpanzee, director, John Lemont; *The Terror of the Tongs*, Hammer, Anthony Bushell directing.

LESLIE NORMAN: *The Long and the Short and the Tall*, from the Willis Hall stage play. This first of a series of Michael Balcon Productions for Warner-Pathé has been held up by Laurence Harvey's prolonged absence on *Butterfield 8* in Hollywood. Also starring are Richard Todd and Richard Harris.

Jack Lemmon in Billy Wilder's "The Apartment".





Interviewing



BUNUEL

by DEREK PROUSE

LUIS BUNUEL MUST BE the least publicity-seeking person in the film industry, and when the BBC suggested that I should film an interview with him in Mexico on the way back from the Mar del Plata festival, I considered the chances of his consenting extremely slender. A talk, yes; a filmed interview, never. When we met, he owned that his acceptance had cost him many a subsequent moment of repining, and up to the very moment of my arrival had hoped vainly for a hurricane which would, among other things, annul the project. It was gratifying to find that, to life's pin-pricks, Buñuel's first solution embraced violence.

Impossible to keep away from *L'Age d'Or* for long. Did those thirty-year-old prophecies of doom and destruction for a raddled civilisation still sum up his attitude to life? "Yes," he was quick to affirm. "Of course I'm old now and the violence has simmered down; but I still think the same way." But there is nothing old about the rumbling flow of trenchant statements which erupts from him in his gravelly Spanish bark. He sees few films, and stays to the end of even fewer. Only *Hiroshima mon Amour* had kept him firmly in his seat, earning his unstinted praise as a genuine cinematic advance both in form and content.

Buñuel's intolerance, though of course irritating when launched against one's own preferences, nevertheless carries a weight of insight, of precise dismissal. The intellectual content of Bergman's films, for instance, their implicit attitude towards life and death, he found naïve; and, consequently, he could see little merit in the dramatic power that cloaked them. For Buñuel today (as in *Wild Strawberries*) the high point of drama lies at the crossroads of life: the moment of doubt. This was the climax of *Nazarin*, when the priest who has dedicated himself to the ideal of Christian charity finally comes to question the Christian ethic (the last scene, in which he hesitates to accept the pineapple proffered out of pity by an old woman at the roadside). "The fact of his being a priest is not so important," Buñuel said. "I merely wanted to show an essentially 'good' man a prey to doubt."

At Cuernavaca, just south of Mexico City, Buñuel had filmed the last scenes of *La Fièvre Monte à El Pao* in Cortez' palace. It was good to learn that Gérard Philipe had been as gay as a cricket throughout the filming. Buñuel regretted as much as I did that the film itself had proved such an undistinguished affair. "We worked for months on the script," he said, "but it doesn't matter how long you work if there's nothing there in the first place. We'd originally wanted to film *El Fraile* (the Gothic horror-piece *The Monk*) which has, for me, great psychological and poetic values apart from its erotic content. Then Philipe went cold on this idea. I'm not disclaiming responsibility for *El Pao*. We were both weak. There were certain political and social elements I liked in the story, but they finally got lost in the melodrama."

One point which Buñuel fervently wishes to make clear to his European critics is the position of the director in Mexico. Films are still mostly shot in 15 days; some five or six a year may have a schedule extending to 25 days. He is forced to accept subjects simply in order to exist and to support his cosmopolitan family (his immensely amiable French wife, whom he met in 1926 when she was a eurhythmics teacher in Paris; his two sons, one American and one French). Salaries are correspondingly low, and financial considerations may induce him to accept a rubbishy script, although never one which promotes ideas he does not share.

Even now, after many years, the Mexican film industry still has no accurate measure of Buñuel. The producers (Manuel Barbachano Ponce is one honourable exception) still concentrate on the traditional Mexican mixture of music, rape and a flavour of sadism, with a prestige film on the Mexican Revolution intended to dazzle the international festivals. The

invitation to *Nazarin* from Cannes last year came as a great surprise to the industry, as also did this year's invitation to *The Young One*, a Mexican-American production. Buñuel invited me to the first showing of the rough-cut at the large and extremely impressive studio; and for once he was enthusiastic about one of his own films.

Set in a Southern States swampland, *The Young One* is a tight drama about a Negro on the run from a rape charge, a brutish game-warden, and a 14-year-old girl, charged with life to her finger-tips. By the time Southern justice arrives to claim the Negro, the girl has been seduced by the warden; and the drama of a white man angling his way out of a capital charge is juxtaposed with the plight of the Negro, facing certain lynching on the mainland as a result of the malicious charges made by a middle-aged white woman. There is one scene, deceptively incidental and pitched in a deliberately low key, which is the most disquieting exposure I have seen of a familiar antagonism. The Negro, captured and bound, is talked to by the white man. The time is night; the mood is expansive. The tone is intimate, essentially friendly, until one realises that the Negro is being addressed not as a man at all but simply as an intractable animal.

Although the portrayal of the girl is sometimes inadequate in individual scenes, as a fully-drawn character it seemed to me a triumph. And it was with something like grim mirth that Buñuel confessed he had almost cancelled the whole project after the first week because of her (and others') inability to perform the simplest actions with a semblance of naturalism. "I had to ask Zachary Scott to overact in order to impose some sort of unity on the playing," said Buñuel. Then, gradually, the tensions had eased. "But, finally," he added, "I'd still prefer to work with someone like her than with any star. The chances of capturing something real are so much greater." The film generates a strong compassion for its bigoted characters, seeming a far cry from the angry pity of *Land Without Bread*—and this from a script which might easily have conveyed only sharp condemnation. Buñuel recognises this: "I find I feel more tenderness now," he said. So, after all, the interim since *L'Age d'Or* has affected its change.

There can be few artists who regard their own work with such a dispassionate eye. He likes *El*, his study of paranoia. "Though it was shot so fast that if I could do it again, I'd make it very differently." Of his *Wuthering Heights*, about which I had heard so much praise in France: "It's no good. A great book—in the old Paris days it was the novel we most admired. And I think I did catch some of its feeling in the last three reels, but while I was away they overlaid a massive Wagnerian sound track. Nobody can even ask for a piece of bread without a great poum-poum-poum on the track."

It occurred to me that few of Buñuel's films are concerned to evoke specific Mexican values (the exception is, of course, *Los Olvidados*, his first important film in Mexico). He clearly sees little of the country itself or of local activity, still creates purely from an uncluttered inner life. When he shoots on location they stop at the first possible site, the closer to home the better. My own tourist jaunts met with no responsive gleam, until suddenly: "You must go to a place about three hours to the North—there's a cemetery there, absolutely unique! There's something in the quality of the air and the soil which prevents decomposition of bodies, and an old woman of eighty can go and see her own grandmother looking younger than she is herself. It's marvellous. That's probably where you'll find me next time you come: I'm hoping to shoot a scene there for my next film." So, after all, Buñuel was a tourist after his own fashion.

Was he concerned that much of his work remains inaccessible in Europe? Hardly. "After we'd made *Le Chien Andalou* I tried to have all the copies burnt. And when I'm dead I hope they burn everything I've ever made. I share the feelings of the Marquis de Sade. I want them to burn me and throw me to the four winds. I want to disappear completely, without trace."

Opposite page. Above and below: two scenes from "The Young One". Centre: Buñuel with Zachary Scott, who plays the game-warden.



"L'Avventura".

CANNES 1960

CANNES THIS YEAR varied the usual festival procedure, which crelegates the most expendable items to the first week, and began with something of a bang. Both of us missed Ichikawa's controversial *Obsession*; but the first week was dominated by the one film that everyone had come to see. Fellini night drew a packed house, waiting to be scandalised.

Unhappily, after about half an hour, it became apparent that *La Dolce Vita* was not going to be the masterpiece that had been promised. Festivals are supposed to thrive on controversy, however, and Cannes proved true to form by giving it the Grand Prix. Together with Antonioni's *L'Avventura*, the film became the festival's main talking point, with opinions ranging from that of an American journalist who likened it to the contents of a sewer, to Luis Buñuel's surprisingly eulogistic quote in the local trade press. Surprising, because Buñuel should know all about the limits of bourgeois criticism and this is the trap into which Fellini has fallen.

La Dolce Vita is an angry film and a sad film, but only occasionally does it hint at the sources of the corruption it displays in such detail. The film's six or seven "panels"—a fake miracle attended by a frenzied crowd, an intellectuals' party, a series of orgies, a sleazy tour around night spots—supply Fellini with more than enough material for his attack; and parts of the narrative have all the surface brilliance and invention we have come to expect. The use of interrelated episodes may partially explain why the film often appears to be saying the same thing over and over again. And the script

does not quite manage to bring into focus the moral problem of its protagonist, a cheap-jack Roman journalist played with a degree of inflexible glumness by the otherwise excellent Marcello Mastroianni.

Fellini, then, is seen here as an emotional rather than an analytical artist. But his observation of his female characters—flamboyant American star, neurotic mistress, giggly night club dancer, sex-hungry English *émigrées*—is both sardonic and tender, and he has coaxed exceptional performances from Anouk Aimée, Anita Ekberg, Yvonne Furneaux, Magali Noël, among others. After the final orgy, the whole party troops down to the beach to watch a monstrous fish being landed. It is here that Mastroianni catches sight of the girl who has become Fellini's symbol of innocence; and his helpless gesture of defeat as the girl beckons him seems symbolic of Fellini himself. He feels, he protests, he condemns—but his own vantage point is not sufficiently detached for him to speak with a clear, uncorrupted voice.

After this experience, a Russian film set in the last war seemed almost too clean and wholesome. *The Ballad of a Soldier*, the second film of Grigori Choukhrai, sets a lyrical love story against a background of invasion and sorrow. Up to a point it works: Choukhrai's portrait of his soldier hero and the young girl he meets on a short leave has a likeable freshness as well as a slightly forced moralising tone. Its main drawback is that Choukhrai does not seem, at the moment, an intuitive poetic artist: he wants to be tender and honest, but it

does not come easily. The result is that many incidents are too calculated in their assault on the emotions, while some Dovzhenko-like close-ups and groupings prove no substitute for the master himself. Nevertheless, the audience wept and applauded in turn, for this is a film with a reverence for life's joys as well as its heartbreaks.

Rossellini, by contrast, now seems to look back on the war without any real emotional involvement. His latest film, *Era Notte a Roma*, with its desultory conversation on responsibility and the meaning of Fascism for the individual, takes an inordinately long time to trace the passage across Italy of three escaped Allied prisoners. And, after a promising beginning, Rossellini's laudable aim in casting actors of differing nationalities to speak their own languages, becomes more of a handicap than an advantage. Leo Genn as the British officer is painfully heavy; the American is rather featureless; Sergei Bondarchuk comes closest to convincing, except when he is made to sing a sad Russian song on the rooftops.

Cannes certainly had its quota of lengthy and difficult films this year, some of them disturbing the tranquillity of an often over-impatient audience. The Spanish and Swedish entries, leading the field in violence, provided two distinctly uneasy evenings. Carlos Saura, young director of the Spanish *Los Golfos*, wisely rejected a fashionable label for his group, yet the film's depiction of a Spain rarely seen on the screen clearly hinted at the beginnings of a new movement. The film's method is as rough and ready as its protagonists—a group of Madrid semi-delinquents who rob and cheat in order to set up one of their number as a bullfighter—and it could easily be faulted for its confused middle sections. But the feeling for its grimy milieu and the sordid, anti-romantic view of the final *corrida* communicate a real passion. The rawly handsome faces of the boys themselves (mainly non-professionals) seem to belong to an unmistakably Spanish world of lost illusions.

Bergman, of course, is an old hand at startling his audience. But even he has not exceeded the shock tactics of *The Virgin Spring*, with its close-up investigations of rape and vomiting, its final savage mass killing, all contained within the framework of a medieval legend. It is a little difficult to see what is Bergman's precise purpose here: the conflict between Christianity and paganism is a familiar enough theme, but despite the fact that the film ends with a miracle it is not really religious in tone. It looks as if Bergman has again been engulfed by the blackness of his earlier period (*Prison*, etc.), the main difference being that the new film has flashes of great tenderness as well as massive technical authority. Max von

Sydow is magnificent as the avenging father of the murdered girl, notably in the scene where he prepares and cleanses himself for the act of killing. This performance (strangely neglected by the Jury) and the images of death and terror somehow stay in the mind long after the festival's more easily likeable items. But the old question remains: where can Bergman now go from here?

Finally, what of the *nouvelle vague*? Plenty of new work was on view on the festival fringe, mostly first films by young directors working sometimes with assistance from their predecessors, Chabrol and Truffaut. I have space only for brief impressions—several excellent new actresses, over-long scripts, much wild but exciting shooting, but nothing really comparable to the films we saw last year. Best of the bunch: Doniol-Valcroze's *L'Eau à la Bouche*, a glossy romance with echoes of Renoir and Bergman; and Philippe de Broca's *Les Jeux de l'Amour*—sophisticated modern triangle, elegant sets, a kind of Prévert comedy with music. Altogether, the festival's most promising French début.

JOHN GILLET

IN THE HIGHLY CHARGED, artificially stimulating atmosphere of an international festival, perhaps the critic's first duty is to keep his head. How many of us have been led into wild over-estimations of those unmistakable "festival films", all surface and sensation, which can seem so much less satisfactory, three or four months later, amid the workaday connotations of a London press show? How many have surrendered too readily to boredom? Yet, whatever the hazards to the cool, clear critical judgment, a festival has one outstanding advantage: nowhere else does it seem easier—or more essential—to distinguish the artists from the craftsmen, to extract from a week or so of intensified film-going a sense of where dividing lines exist, and who stands on each side of them. Cannes, 1960, was to a sufficient extent a festival of artists; and if it is the mark of an artist that he should always seem to be stretching his talent, advancing towards an indefinable frontier, then one film during Cannes' second week out-distanced the rest.

Michelangelo Antonioni's *L'Avventura* was shown to an accompaniment of boos and jeers, yawns and laughter, such as I have never heard in a cinema. The film spectacularly exhausted the patience of this audience; and it would probably tax any audience in the world. Yet *L'Avventura*, for all its apparent failure in the most basic requirement—that of communication—is still the kind of film for which one would trade six easy successes.

Antonioni remains too little known in Britain: only his *Le Amiche* has been publicly shown here, and that belatedly. *L'Avventura* begins like *Le Amiche* transferred to the sea-coast: a group of rich Italians embark for a yachting weekend; relations are established, particularly between Anna, unhappy daughter of an industrialist, her architect lover and her friend Claudia. The party lands on a grey volcanic island; and Anna disappears, dropping out of the group, out of life. Is she dead (as we soon believe), has she been kidnapped, has she somehow made her way to the Sicilian mainland? The second half of Antonioni's film concerns the search for Anna, part real, part an illusory, dream-like quest, the growing love between Claudia and the architect, and the final realisation (adumbrated much earlier in the film) that love solves no problems. Antonioni is the cinema's supreme exponent of the cliché that men live out their lives in quiet desperation. The style of his film, its formal beauty, its ability to appear at once extravagant and withdrawn, its intellectualism, its concentration on aimlessness—people walking idly about, counting out the minutes of boredom, people poised on the edge of action they fear to



Alexei Batalov and Ya Savvina in "The Lady with the Dog".



Prison group from Becker's "*Le Trou*".

take, or acting out of lethargy and frustration—is the expression of a philosophy. *L'Avventura* sometimes seems *deliberately* monotonous, which the festival audience could not forgive; it is sometimes too grandiose; and there is a suggestion of a split down the middle, so that between the masterly control of the island episode and the occasional excesses of the search one senses a gap separating the film the director began from the film he completed. Some French critics instantly labelled it as "Taormina, mon Amour"; and certainly this director is as bold an experimenter as Resnais.

Another impossible love; another slow, sombre film. The Russian *Lady With the Dog*, directed by Joseph Heifits from Tchekov's short story, has all that extraordinary Soviet aptitude for placing a film so exactly in its period that nothing seems imposed from outside, as well as an elegiac stillness and melancholy. The first forty minutes—the couple's meeting at Yalta, the development of their affair against the listless setting of a nineteenth-century watering place—makes a sustained duologue, flawlessly played by Alexei Batalov and a new actress, Ya Savvina. Later scenes, introducing the man's family background, slightly break the spell; but the end, a return to the duologue, is daringly grave and austere. There is



no parting, no renunciation, just a sad little meeting in a Moscow hotel room and a fade-out like a dying fall.

Peter Brook's *Moderato Cantabile* takes a not entirely dissimilar theme: the lost lady, frantically married, in a French provincial town, the boredoms of the *vie de province*, the attempted affair with her husband's young employee. But this is a melancholy film in a different sense. Clearly the director and the writers, Marguerite Duras and Gérard Jarlot, meant us to be moved by those sad sentences so coldly and precisely articulated by Jeanne Moreau, by the chilly river landscapes and the slow, slow tracking shots; clearly they meant the pauses to be infinitely meaningful. But the gap between intention and execution is enormous. The theme is simply not realised imaginatively, and for all his talent as a theatre director Peter Brook has never been able to get the picture off the ground.

The other French entries were stronger. Jacques Becker's *Le Trou*, played by non-professionals and studying in riveting detail the mechanics of a prison break, is concerned also with the comradeship among the men taking part in it, with their final bleak experience of betrayal. Here is the director's habitual feeling for the temper and mood of people at work and an almost clinical dissection of how men behave under stress: a firm, sober, honest film, and tragically Becker's last. Only nationality links *Le Trou* with François Reichenbach's *L'Amérique Insolite*, a rather dilettantish survey of the contemporary American scene, with emphasis predictably on the grotesque, on drum majorettes and publicity stunts, *Wild One* motor cyclists and Disneyland Americana. Often brilliantly shot, Reichenbach's film is a bit loosely assembled. Its commentary—which in direct English translation would sound improbably naive—seems a text-book illustration of that involved love-hate relationship with America which is so significant an undercurrent of the *nouvelle vague*.

If Reichenbach's *L'Amérique* concentrates on what he wanted to find, Buñuel, in *The Young One*, has assimilated an island off the coast of one of the Southern states into his own personal landscape. This story of a Negro on the run, of shades of corruption and innocence, belongs solely to its director. The playing (including Zachary Scott's) is inept, the dialogue veers between naturalistic and stilted, and these handicaps blur the film's impression. Yet the plainness, reminiscent of Buñuel's other island film, *Robinson Crusoe*, the translucence of the style, the absolute denial of effect, give *The Young One* the forcefulness of a parable. Buñuel takes the shortest cuts to what he wants to say; and what he says concerns, as always, the corruptibility of man. No one else would dare to be so unassuming; no one else could make "art" seem so unnecessary.

Antonioni; Heifits; Buñuel: these three made the rest look conventional. But Cannes this year revealed a cinema prepared, on several fronts, to defy conventions. The Polish *Cross Eyed Luck* satirised bureaucracy, Stalinism, war-time conventions of conduct, and every other target it could hit, in its story of a man who longs to conform. But Andrzej Munk's comic invention, unhappily, is no match for his Chaplinesque theme. The Americans (whose official entry, *Home from the Hill*, went down much less well than the British *Sons and Lovers*) tried, out of competition, to emulate the new wave. Leslie Stevens' *Private Property* has admirable camerawork (by Ted McCord) and gives a passable account of beat generation infantilism before degenerating into B-picture violence and sex. Trying to shock the bourgeois is a popular sideline of the *nouvelle vague* and its imitators. The real, rare shocks, though, remain the revelations of talent looking beyond and outside itself. And Cannes this year, at its best, managed to look like a festival of maturity which had not abandoned exploration.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

A fight scene in the Spanish "*Los Golfos*".



the year of **LA DOLCE VITA**

MORANDO MORANDINI

At Cannes this year the two most widely discussed films of the festival were probably *La Dolce Vita* and *L'Avventura*. Clearly, after a period of indecision, 1960 is likely to be a major year for the Italian cinema; and we have invited Morando Morandini, critic and editor of the film magazine "Schermi", to comment on recent developments.

IN CONTRADICTION, AS IT WERE, to M-G-M's celebrated slogan, "1960 is the year of *Ben-Hur*", it can unquestionably be said that in Italy *La Dolce Vita* is the film of 1960.

In three months Fellini's film has taken more than one and a half milliard lire, smashing box-office records previously held in the main Italian cities by such films as *Gone With the Wind* and *The Ten Commandments*. With public debates everywhere, leading articles, questions in Parliament, nine attacks from *Osservatore Romano*, the Vatican newspaper, *La Dolce Vita* has stirred up one of the most violent and far-reaching of post-war Italian controversies. The film has split Roman Catholic ranks. Whilst the Jesuits of Milan and Genoa have defended it, the Catholic Film Centre has classified it as "forbidden for all audiences"; whilst the critics of six Catholic dailies have reviewed it with considerable respect, Catholic Action has labelled it as blasphemous, pornographic, bestial and un-Italian. Finally, it has brought about a crisis in Left-wing criticism. The critics of the Left, who since *I Vitelloni* have described Fellini as "a traitor to neo-realism", now find

themselves forced into the position of defending his film on aesthetic grounds against those who would like to see it banned.

All the same, if 1960 is going to be the most memorable year for the Italian cinema since the great days of neo-realism, it will not only be because of *La Dolce Vita*.

In Milan, last March, Luchino Visconti began work on *Rocco and his Brothers*—the title being intended as a tribute to Thomas Mann's trilogy, *Joseph and his Brothers*. Here, after his recent experiments in romanticism (splendid in *Senso*; less successful in *Notti Bianche*), the director returns to realism in its most committed sense, with an ambitious treatment of a story about a peasant family from the South which emigrates to Milan. Visconti sees this new film as a kind of sequel to *La Terra Trema*, and it is not just by chance that the film will begin and end by the sea at Luciana.

Meanwhile, Michelangelo Antonioni continues his bold and scrupulous investigation into the ways of middle-class life. In his new film, *L'Avventura*, we see what happens to various couples of rich townsfolk holiday-making on one of the islands off Sicily—their journey, incidentally, more or less reversing that taken by the people in Visconti's film. It is also worth noting that, like Fellini, Visconti and Antonioni are now making films which run for close on three hours. These directors are beginning to show a bold and unaccustomed respect for the

Above: "*La Dolce Vita*".



Visconti on the set of "Rocco and his Brothers".

film with time to develop, to motivate its characters on the scale of a good novel; and their producers, it seems, are at last prepared to break with that stultifying commercial convention which argues that only the Hollywood "epic" is entitled to a running time of more than two hours.

Since *Il General della Rovere* won its award at Venice last year, Rossellini has at last become a prophet accepted in his own country; and he has begun working again at high speed. In three months he completed *Era Notte a Roma*, yet another Resistance story but this time seen through the eyes of three prisoners of war escaping from the Germans. (They are played by the Soviet actor Sergei Bondarchuk, the English Leo Genn and the American Peter Baldwin.) In May he began shooting *Una Donna al Giorno*, about the sexual adventures of an Italian deported to Germany during the war; and he already has on the stocks *Viva L'Italia*, a story about the exploits of Garibaldi and his Thousand in Sicily.

Of the other established names, Renato Castellani is working on the script of *Il Brigante*, a story of banditry in the South during the post-war period, whilst de Sica and Zavattini are preparing *La Ciociara*, from Alberto Moravia's novel, which again has a war-time setting. So, one way or another, it looks as though all the big names of the Italian cinema will be active again during 1960. Is this just a matter of chance or is there in fact some new force at work in Italian cinema? Is the crisis of ideas and spirit which followed the neo-realist period over at last? It is too soon to give a definite answer, and it might be better to leave talk of a new "renaissance" to optimists and lovers of rhetoric. After all, one should remember that 1954 was an important year for the Italian cinema, with films such as *Senso*, *La Strada* and *Romeo and Juliet*, yet these pictures existed in isolation and led nowhere.

In what direction are the latest films by Fellini and Visconti, Rossellini and Antonioni, likely to lead us? Certainly there is nothing in Italy that can be called a *nouvelle vague*, no specific group or movement which finds its impetus in opposition to the older generation. There is not here, as there is in France, a clear-cut distinction between young and old. There, the masters and so-called masters (Renoir, Clair, Carné, etc.) all came out of the pre-war cinema. In Italy the generation of Rossellini, de Sica and Visconti is still too close, and the younger artists still feel that the lesson—or should it be the

myth?—of neo-realism is something to which they should subscribe, even though their loyalty may be a matter of words rather than actions. On the other hand, the initiators of neo-realism are all now in their fifties or older. In their finest period, soon after the war, problems could be honestly simplified and the alternatives of fascism or anti-fascism were clear to see. It is not so now. Many social and economic distinctions appear to be vanishing; many illusions (including the Communist dream) have crumbled; and consciences may be gagged by pressure groups from the business world or the Church.

Moreover it seems clear that, with the exception of Fellini, Antonioni, and possibly Pietro Germi, the "middle generation" in the Italian cinema has little to offer. The group known as the "Milanese" directors (Lattuada, Emmer, Risi, Comencini) seem, at their best, competent commercial film-makers, with only occasional flickers that suggest a more exciting or original talent. Others, such as Giuseppe de Sanctis, Carlo Lizzani, Antonio Pietrangeli, Glauro Pellegrini (all, like the Milanese group, film critics before becoming film-makers) have dissipated their talents in oscillating between pretentious, botched experiments and lavish commercial films. Still, 1960 is likely to be a testing time for all of them, since they too are making films this year. And two of these productions at least, Lizzani's *Il Ribelle* (about a celebrated Roman bandit at the beginning of the war) and Pietrangeli's *Adua e le Compagne* (showing how a group of prostitutes work their way back into society after the closing of the public brothels) could well prove interesting.

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One could list a dozen or more names among the younger generation of Italian film-makers, but in trying to indicate which are the outstanding talents one is inevitably led into the territory of prophecy and personal preference. For us, at this moment, the most gifted would appear to be Mauro Bolognini (aged 37), Valerio Zurlini (34) and Franco Rossi (41). Above all these, in a sense, is Pier Paolo Pasolini, the poet and novelist whose *Le Cenere di Gramsci*, *Ragazzi di Vita* and *Una Vita Violenta* have established him among the leaders of the new generation in literature.

First, though, I should perhaps clear up what is meant by "young". Pasolini, Bolognini and most of the others are nearer forty than thirty. An exception is Francesco Maselli, who was only twenty when he began making documentaries and who directed his first feature, *Gli Sbandati* (1954), when he was twenty-four. But Maselli, the *enfant gaté* of the Left-wing critics, flopped terribly with *La Donna del Giorno* (1956); and only this year, after several documentaries, has he again found a producer willing to back him on a feature. His new film is *I Delfini*, an ambitious piece about the landowners' and industrialists' children who will become the governing class of the future. Until recently, Maselli seemed distinguished by immense confidence, a confused and limited stock of ideas, and a view of reality which left him more interested in the structure of society than the emotions of people. *I Delfini* will show if his talent is a developing one.

Another director still in his twenties, Ermanno Olmi, is an entirely different type: a modest and direct young man who, while working in the film department of a large hydro-electric concern, has managed to make several industrial documentaries and a feature-length picture shot in the mountains. His work is simple and graceful, and the film he is now preparing will be yet another war subject: *Il Sergente nella Neve*, based on the diary of an Italian on the Russian front in 1943.

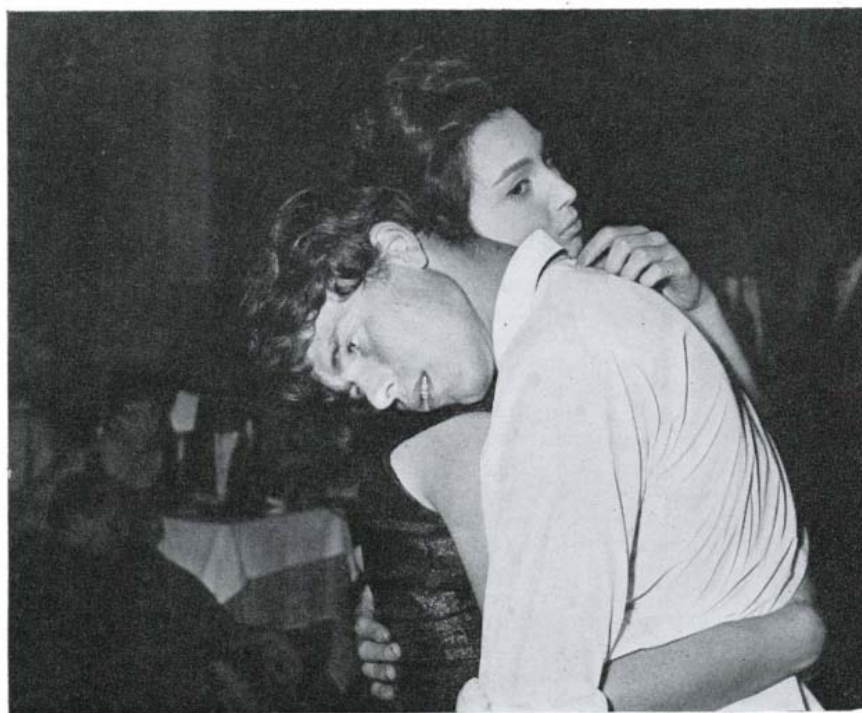
The important partnership between Bolognini and Pasolini began quite casually in 1957, with *Marisa la Civetta*, and only began to yield results in the next year, when they made *Giovani Mariti*. Until then, Bolognini had made half a dozen or so unpretentious commercial films, as well as the more promising *Gli Innamorati*, a comedy with a touch of Goldoni

about it. Its only weakness, but a damaging one, was its association with that whole weary group of dialogue comedies which exploited the remnants of neo-realism to a point almost beyond endurance.

Giovani Mariti was a different matter. For all its evident flaws—a hastily written script left it intellectually weak—it caught the attention of the critics not only through its unmistakable evidence of visual grasp but also by its sharp psychological insight. Then, in one year, Bolognini made three widely varying films. *Arrangiatevi!* was a commercial chore, but it showed what an ingenious director can do with a farce in the most doubtful taste possible. The subject was the closing down of the public brothels (a sensitive point in certain Italian circles) and the film managed to make a clear, crude and understandable point in Totò's final clowning speech, with his invitation to the Italians to free themselves from their "brothel complex".

La Notte Brava and *Il Bell'Antonio*, however, are both closer to the style of *Giovani Mariti*, and both of them stem from the director's collaboration with Pasolini. Notwithstanding their affinities, there is a significant difference between director and writer which can be expressed in a single political statement: Bolognini, though a democrat and a nonconformist, is a man who accepts the present social order; Pasolini, a convinced though heretical Marxist, rejects it. This is perhaps why *La Notte Brava*, based on stories Pasolini devoted years ago to the working-class people of the villages around Rome, has on the screen lost the original's weight of social protest. It has been virtually transformed into a picturesque tale, romantic and decadent in type, set in a baroque Rome, an hallucinatory, artificial city. It is not only the presence of Laurent Terzieff and Jean-Claude Brialy, curiously transmogrified into typical "ragazzi di vita" (a rather unusual brand of Teddy boy) which makes *La Notte Brava* seem the Italian film closest in style and feeling to the French *nouvelle vague*.

Bolognini has a modern, European talent, not least apparent in the rather morbid but honest pleasure he takes in breaking through sexual taboos. His newest film, *Il Bell'Antonio*, is based on the well-known novel by the late Vitaliano Brancati, the anti-Fascist satirical writer. Shifted from the Mussolini era to our own time, the story concerns the adventures of a Sicilian Adonis, idol of the women of Catania, yet impotent, incapacitated by an excess of love from consummating his own marriage. Brancati's wise and rich novel used the subject as the theme of a melancholy satire. But Pasolini and



Laurent Terzieff and Rosanna Schiaffino in "*La Notte Brava*".

Bolognini have placed the accent on the adjective and relegated the noun to second place. Their film is interior drama, the study of an individual case; and one result of this shift of emphasis has been to weaken certain main relationships so that they seem inadequately motivated. Stylistically admirable (there is a wonderful central part, excellently played), *Il Bell'Antonio* confirms an impression that with Bolognini the Italian cinema has acquired its first really "decadent" director. His danger seems to lie in his extreme facility: like some others of his generation, he knows how to make films extremely well without perhaps having a great deal to say.

3

Valerio Zurlini certainly does not belong to this group. He began his career in documentary and his first feature, *Le Ragazze di San Frediano*, dates from 1954. It was a light-hearted comedy, well received by the Italian critics, and it was unusual to find a first film so stylistically mature and shrewdly judged. But this was a routine commercial production and Zurlini's contribution to the script was only marginal. For four years Zurlini then stayed out of the limelight, working on various scripts; and four years' silence is a long time, particularly for a director at the beginning of his career. Zurlini, though, is one of those relatively rare film-makers who would rather wait than settle for a commercial compromise. His patience has at last paid off, and his *Estate Violenta* was in some respects, at least until *La Dolce Vita* appeared, the most interesting Italian film of the season.

The "violent summer" of the film's title is that of 1943; the climax of the action comes on July 25th, the day when Mussolini fell. Within this context of time, Zurlini has worked out the story of a love affair between a thirty-year-old woman, the widow of an officer killed in action, and a boy ten years younger, the son of a Fascist official. Located at a smart seaside resort on the Adriatic, the film is also a subtle study of certain rich Italians who try—and partly manage, thanks to



"*Estate Violenta*": Eleanora Rossi-Drago plays the heroine of Zurlini's film.

their money—to escape from the war into a kind of prolonged holiday. Their only opposition to Fascism is in the dead weight of their indifference. The film, however, keeps historical and political events in the background: Zurlini does not so much present events realistically as trust to foreshortening and allusion, the result being a limitation of his film's range but not of its intensity. The Fascist leader, father of the boy played by Jean-Louis Trintignant, is so precisely defined that he seems a character of almost allegorical significance; the attack on the Fascist barracks might appear out of context, except that its chaos and gangsterism serve exactly to catch the sense of the moral confusion of the time; and the closing scenes of the bombardment are not only an exhibition of spectacle and technical skill but a fitting conclusion to an eminently personal film.

Many Italian critics have reproached Zurlini for his unwillingness or inability to make more use of the historical moment, drawing the conclusion that his love story could have taken place at any other instant in time. These arguments, though, seem superficial, the product of that rather narrow conformism which still affects many of the more seriously "engaged" among the Italian critics. What has not perhaps been clearly enough grasped is that Zurlini, setting out to interpret and bear witness to the ideological and moral disorder among Italian intellectuals at this period, has picked on the presentation of a middle-class society already given distance by time, and approached it through an allusive style verging on symbolism. One could say, however, that having chosen such a style he has not carried it far enough (compare his film with some of the best *nouvelle vague* pictures) and that he has over-burdened his love story with an excess of autobiographical detail. Yet the failure of detachment which is the film's weakness is also one of its strengths.

As we have seen, *Estate Violenta* is not the only Italian film which looks back to the immediate past, to Fascism and the war. Sergio Capone, a former student at the Centro Sperimentale in Rome, last year made *Un Eroe del Nostro Tempo*, the portrait of a young man who, after fighting in a Fascist brigade, finds himself morally and politically lost in the democratic climate of post-war Italy. This was an ambitious failure, produced outside the normal commercial channels, and it has had only limited showing. At the moment, three films currently in production, all by young directors, show a return to similar themes. *La Lunga Notte del '43*, the first feature made by the documentary director Florestano Vancini, deals with the anti-Semitic persecution organised by the Black Brigade in Ferrara in 1943 and stars Belinda Lee. *Kapo*, made by the thirty-year-old Gillo Pontecorvo, brother of the nuclear physicist, stars Susan Strasberg and is set in a Nazi concentration camp. And Nanny Loy (aged 34) is making a realistic comedy, set in Rome during the war, which tries to show the less heroic and less publicised aspects of the Italian people's opposition to Fascism and Nazism.

The war is also the background to the film being prepared by the Neapolitan Francesco Rosi, now aged 38 and formerly Visconti's assistant. Two years ago, Rosi's first feature, *La Sfida*, was noisily acclaimed. But Rosi was lucky in that his picture appeared at a particularly lean period for the Italian cinema, so that critics were perhaps inclined to over-estimate it, to mistake its Hollywood imitations for the realism they wanted to find. Rosi's *I Magliari* came out last autumn and did well at the box-office (its leading player, Alberto Sordi, has replaced the Lollobrigidas and Lorens of a few years ago as the star most in favour with the Italian public). It had a chilly critical reception, however; and although it shows a

development from *La Sfida*, it also perhaps indicates the limitations of Rosi's talent, suggesting that he is an excellent technician rather than a creator. In fact François Truffaut's malicious comment on *La Sfida*—"We expected a Visconti and all we saw was a Lattuada"—probably goes for *I Magliari* as well. There are some fine things about it, notably the evocation of Hamburg and the direction of the players—Rosi has been Belinda Lee's Pygmalion, just as Zurlini has done great things for Eleanora Rossi-Drago in *Estate Violenta*. The film, however, does not give sufficient dramatic coherence to its contrast of the Neapolitans abroad and the new, prosperous German "miracle". Nor, for that matter, does it satisfactorily come to terms with the element of trite moralising which seems the last vestige of a bad conscience in so many works of this kind, the dwindling descendants of the neo-realist tradition.

Rosi is now preparing the last part of his Neapolitan trilogy—as he himself describes it—the third act of his affectionate criticism of Naples and the Neapolitans. This will be *La Galleria*, from the novel by John Horne Burns, with its account of Naples in 1944, of the relationship of English and American soldiers with the Neapolitans and the city's conquest of its conquerors. "Naples," wrote Burns with dramatic emphasis, "was in 1944 the heart of the world." The film Rosi makes of his book is likely to prove the most critical test to date of his talent.

Another director whose first film demands mention in this survey is Damiano Damiani, now in his forties. He served the usual apprenticeship (documentaries, screenwriting, etc.) and his feature, *Il Rossetto*, has a script by Zavattini and a score by Giovanni Fusco. This new director has learnt a lot from the French and Americans, as well as from the Italians. From the first, he has learnt the advantage of working out what he wants to say in terms of a thriller; from the Americans, he has picked up a taste for spectacular climaxes, as well as understanding of how to handle his characters naturalistically; and from the



Belinda Lee in "La Lunga Notte del '43", a war story about the victims of a Fascist brigade.

Italians—the Zavattini lesson—he has absorbed a concern with moral issues, social facts and behaviour. The starting point of Damiani's film is oddly like that of the English *Tiger Bay*, though his theme in fact takes another direction: a study of that present day phenomenon the "nymphet". But for some melodramatic rough edges in the closing scenes, and an excessive emphasis on intrigue at the expense of feeling, *Il Rossetto* might well have been a wholly successful film.

5

I have left to the last the work of Franco Rossi, whose *Amici per la Pelle* (1955) was generally undervalued in Italy but seems to me a little masterpiece of psychological storytelling. Rossi is almost unique in a society where over-confidence is not only a general failing but even a kind of compulsion: his weakness is extreme modesty, a tendency towards self-criticism which goes so far that he will allow an assistant director to take the credit for a film, or will find himself accepting responsibility for a third-rate production. Rossi has talent, sensibility, a cultivated mind, as well as something lacking in many of his contemporaries—real love and respect for man, for his neighbour. He ought to be an important director.

His latest film, *Morte di un Amico*, gives proof of his qualities. It, too, owes its origin to a story by Pasolini: more "ragazzi di vita", prostitutes, a taste for violence, the working class of Rome. But only a hint of Pasolini survives, and *Morte di un Amico* is a long way from *La Notte Brava*. Pasolini talks of it angrily; and from his own point of view he has every reason to do so. Not only is the film's moral argument worked out in schematic terms, not only does it take on in its closing stages something of the puritanical tone of certain American films, but everything worthwhile in it—its tenderness, its concern with physical and moral well-being—is at the opposite pole from Pasolini's own qualities. Rossi was commissioned to make the film, and doesn't wholly subscribe to it himself, but what he has managed to make of it is none the less remarkable. His two prostitutes are triumphantly real; and in the strange figure of the fence we have from Fanfulla, a street musician, the kind of incisive characterisation one associates with the Charles Laughton of twenty years ago. Rossi has now gone to the South Seas, where he will be filming with a small group. Will he give us another of the many exotic exercises in sham documentary, another *Lost Continent*, or will he make a Franco Rossi film?

6

In trying to give something like an overall picture of the Italian film scene, the danger is that one can easily be both too vague and too pedantic. I have been mainly concerned with the film-makers of the future, with potentialities rather than achievements, and I have tried to avoid *a priori* judgments. How, though, is one really to separate the grain from the chaff? Considerations of space, too, make it impossible for me to go into details of the economic and financial situation. There is one point, however, which is worth thinking about.

Almost without exception, our young directors have reacted to the French *nouvelle vague* with either suspicion or indifference. Most of them, and many of the critics as well, regard it all as a kind of bluff; they welcomed *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, for instance, with reservations; they rejected *Hiroshima mon Amour*. Apart from the fact that many of them are employing actors launched and established by their French colleagues (Moreau and Riva, Terzieff and Blain, Pierre Brice



A Hamburg location scene from Francesco Rosi's "I Magliari".

and Brialy), there is a certain ungratefulness in their attitude. When, about the end of last year, Italian producers began, timidly enough, to embark on a slightly bolder production policy, this was largely as a result of the French example. This year, films are being made in Italy which two or three years ago could not have been attempted. Fear of censorship, for instance, is an excuse which no longer holds water: Fellini has led the way, in his fashion, showing that certain sexual taboos can be challenged. Films about Fascism can be made, though they may encounter certain hazards and irritations.

It would be difficult, though, to find a movement, a general line of advance, in this picture of recent production. Is the younger directors' interest in the immediate past (the war, Fascism) a way of continuing in the neo-realist tradition, or is it only an escape route from present-day problems which have become for intrinsic reasons too difficult to tackle or through outside pressures too uncomfortable to handle? We must wait until we can see more films, though if it is not unjust to analyse the present in terms of the past, it might be possible to hazard a guess.

The way to neo-realism was very largely prepared by a consistent critical theory, originating about 1939 and developed from then on. After the war, Italian film criticism moved out of step with the times, trying to crystallise a theory of neo-realism when the movement itself was already almost exhausted. Today, there is no living critical theory in Italy, no movement like that in France, no film magazine which can point the way or act as a catalytic agent. There is not, then, the theoretical basis which would encourage experiment. At this point, I am already touching on some of the basic problems of Italian society and culture. But that, as Kipling would say, is another story.

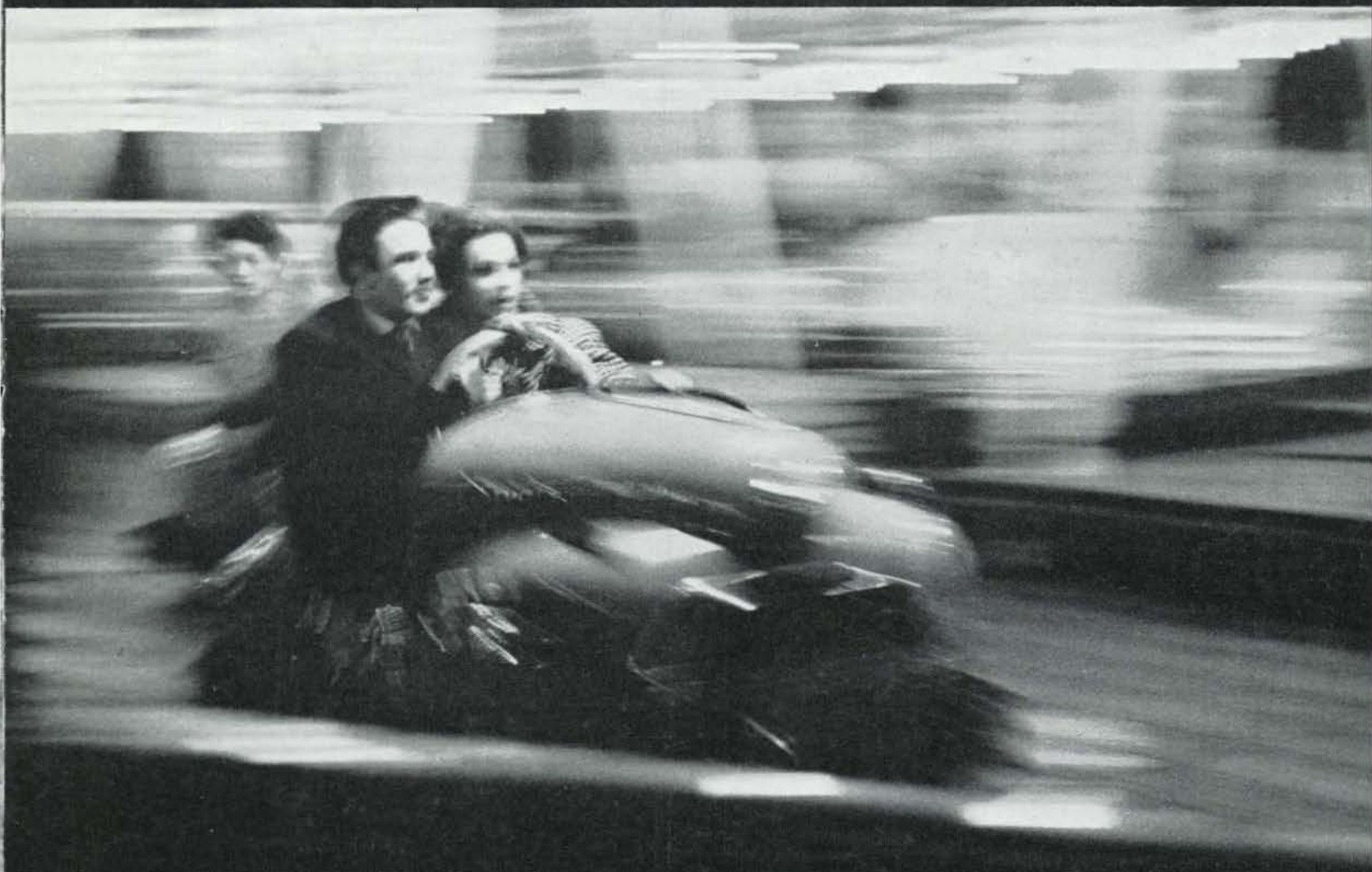
SATURDAY NIGHT AN

Karel Reisz's first feature film, "Saturday Night and Sunday Morning", is an adaptation of Alan Sillitoe's novel about a young Nottingham factory worker. The producer is Tony Richardson, the executive producer Harry Saltzman, and the film will be released through Bryanston and British Lion. The film was made at Twickenham Studios and on location in Nottingham and London, most of these photographs being taken during an all-night session at a fairground just outside London.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS PICTON



ND SUNDAY MORNING



ABOVE LEFT: Conversation between the director, Karel Reisz, and Shirley Ann Field.

FAR LEFT: Unit on location in the fairground. Karel Reisz is on the right of the group in the foreground.

ABOVE: Albert Finney, who plays the leading part, drives a dodgem car with Shirley Ann Field.

LEFT: Rachel Roberts, another of the film's leading players, stands in front of a fairground stall.

IMMEDIATE LEFT: Shirley Ann Field and Albert Finney, photographed while the unit was on location in Nottingham.





*Right: "Toni"
(1934), with
Charles Blavette
(Toni), Jenny Hédia
(Marie) and
Delmont.
Immediately below:
Jean Gabin and
Blanchette Brunoy
in "La Bête
Humaine" (1938).
Below: "La
Chienne" (1931):
Janie Marèze and
Michel Simon.*



RENOIR and REALISM

PETER JOHN DYER

IN 1945, I CAME TO London with an ex-serviceman's scholarship to study acting. At the same time and, as it turned out, more fruitfully, I started going to French films. A couple of minutes' walk from Gower Street was the Berkeley, known then as the Carlton, and my impression of the French cinema soon became fixed by the management's unchanging repertory of pre-war successes. These ranged from symbol-emblazoned erotica (*Remous*) to debased Pabst melodramas, from rarefied Vicki Baum idylls (*Le Lac-aux-Dames*) to raffish novelettes (*Le Grand Jeu*). It was a highly selective repertory. As I recall, there was nothing by Clair or Vigo, and Renoir was represented solely by a Simenon adaptation, *La Nuit du Carrefour*, and *La Bête Humaine*. The latter I had little difficulty in lumping together with the three Carnés offered, doubtless because of Gabin's performance and its halo of fatalism. In fact it was Carné's personality which somehow seemed to infuse all the Carlton's films.

Obviously I was not alone in my enthusiasms. A writer in Sequence One had tracked down *Jenny*, Carné's first feature, and duly noted the sinister lyricism of the suburban back-grounds and the memorable last shots of Rosay against the smoke and the sky on her railway bridge. In later issues, Gavin Lambert communicated a strong, perceptive feeling for Carné, Clair, Cocteau, various writer-director *équipes* and the New Pessimism. He also wrote off Renoir's *La Chienne*, *Les Bas-Fonds* and *La Bête Humaine* as "unsuccessful attempts at low-life drama"; suggested that though curiosity, tolerance and understanding had sustained Renoir, untidiness and lack of concentration seemed too often to have dissipated him; described his career as an enigma, containing too few really satisfying films fully to explain his justly high reputation; finally plumped for *La Règle du Jeu* and *Partie de Campagne* as Renoir's only unqualified successes.

At the time, there seemed no grounds for questioning such judgments, nor for shifting one's allegiances. On the one hand, the frustrations of Renoir's Hollywood career were still freshly self-evident (though one would now like a chance of second thoughts on—say—*Diary of a Chambermaid*), and *The River* merely seemed to confirm Renoir as the most distinguished, richly endowed imperfectionist in the cinema. On the other, the New Pessimism confirmed and extended the dramatic impact of the Carné tradition of aspiration-and-regret, while its own bleaker, savager, psychopathological elements adeptly captured the immediate post-war mood. With Carné's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, widely championed as "the greatest French film ever made", enjoying a prolonged run at the Rialto before yielding to the latest Clouzot, Cayatte and Yves Allégret, Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu* had to be content with a week at the Everyman, *La Chienne* and *Toni* with one-night stands arranged by the New London Film Society at the Scala. The first was generally recognised as a masterpiece; the second, despite Michel Simon's performance, seemed disappointingly colourless compared to Lang's Hollywood version, *Scarlet Street*; the third a bewildered audience walked out on.

Since then, a pendulum of reaction, on the part of both critics and film-makers, has swung from the extreme of Feyder-Carné-Duvivier "poetic realism", with all its creaking formalism and morbidity, to the equally formalist limits of Visconti neo-realism, and begun to swing blindly back again. Except (in Europe) for *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, it has nowhere yet paused with any sureness in between.

It is in no way the purpose of this article to debunk Carné, challenge Lambert's judgment or flay an audience (including myself) which, ten years ago and as yet unweaned on Visconti,

shuffled out half-way through *Toni*. It is doubtful in any case whether Lambert, ever anxious to obtain a just sense of historical perspective, had been able to see *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*, *Toni* and *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*; no mention of them ever appeared in his writings.

Now, however, the National Film Theatre's French season has left the door wide open to revaluation, not only of Renoir himself but of our whole concept of the "well-made film". What I want to say, about the Renoir of the Thirties, is not original. The French have been revisiting Renoir for some ten years now. And yet, highly sensitive as the French are of today's swing back of the pendulum, away from *Terra Trema* and *Ossessione* to the new, experimental formalism of Resnais and Hanoun, only Truffaut seems anxious to stop the pendulum long enough to explore that area in between, sign-posted by improvisation and natural human loyalties, which Renoir annexed in the face of all kinds of opposition and hung on to throughout the Thirties.

2

Renoir was born in Paris, on the Butte Montmartre, in 1894. His father was Auguste Renoir, the impressionist painter. He had an elder brother, Pierre Renoir, the actor, and later a nephew, Claude, the cameraman on *Toni* and *The River*. It was during the war, while convalescing from a leg wound, that "*la révélation de Charlot*" first gave him the idea of a possible career in films, although the apprenticeship was to come some nine years later, after a hesitant period as a ceramist and a journalist. Inspired by Mosjoukine's *Brasier Ardent*, he wrote a scenario for his wife, Catherine Hessling, his father's model, and entrusted it to the actor, Albert Dieudonné, to direct.

Though he has always spoken in glowing terms of the *avant-garde* movement, and of its *truquages* in particular, Renoir today tends to characterise the entire silent period of the French commercial cinema, and his own somewhat stoical part in it, as stagnant and ineffectual. Of his first four films, to make which he formed his own production company, *La Fille de l'Eau* (1924) and *Marquitta* (1927) failed to satisfy him, while the scandalised reactions and box-office failure which greeted both *Nana* (1926), a Zola adaptation directly inspired by ten viewings of Stroheim's *Foolish Wives*, and *Charleston* (1927), an extravagant burlesque, left him completely ruined. Eventually finding a backer for a Hans Andersen adaptation, *La Petite Marchande d'Allumettes* (1927), Renoir now attempted to accommodate certain expressionist, *avant-garde* techniques within a Chaplinesque, impressionistic style, only to suffer yet another blow. An action was brought against him for plagiarism, and though Renoir eventually won the case, he was compelled meanwhile to turn out a commercial series of military farces and costume pieces (*Tire au Flanc*, *Le Tournoi*, *Le Bled*) in order to retain the confidence of French producers. As it was, Renoir ended the silent era as an actor, playing opposite Catherine Hessling in two films directed by his friend Cavalcanti, and two years' inactivity followed before he was allowed to make his first talkie.

Judging by the diverse influences French critics have found in Renoir's later silent films (Chaplin and Stroheim in *Tire au Flanc*—a great favourite with *Cahiers* and the Cinémathèque; Fairbanks in *Le Bled*), it would appear that Renoir's career remained tentative and exploratory throughout the Twenties. Not having seen most of his earlier films, either in full or sufficiently recently, I can only write of *La Fille de l'Eau* as an almost involuntary expression of several themes destined to



"Griffith-like fable": Catherine Hessling and Harold Lewington in "*La Fille de l'Eau*". "Genial anarchy": Michel Simon and Séverine Lerczinska in "*Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*".

preoccupy Renoir throughout his career. Directionless and inexperienced, Renoir affirmed these themes all the more spontaneously through an innocent, Griffith-like fable about a lonely little barge-girl and her love for the shining young man on horseback, son of the local chatelain, who spies her one morning concocting "Irish stew out of vague vegetables". Despite the coy story-titles, Renoir manages to lend the opening scenes considerable authenticity and persuasion, both in his economical portraits of the Raynal family—upstanding, college-boy son, rigidly puritanical mother, anonymous, bourgeois father preoccupied with his new car—and of the village itself, with its big house and courtyard, the surrounding farmland, the trees, rain-clouds, bridle-path, canal and barge. The film was shot on location, and in its feeling for café interiors, wooded exteriors, poachers, tramps, gipsies, rabbits and horses, cows lazing in the running water, one discovers exactly the same river-of-life metaphor which pulsates through *Boudu*, *Partie de Campagne*, *Swamp Water*, *The Southerner*, *The River* and *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Ancillary to the central image is the situation of a rich young man in love with a barge-girl, resolved after a lot of crude and absurd melodrama. (She has to survive a lynch mob, a burning caravan, pursuit through the night "like a tracked beast", a fall down a quarry, lengthy hallucinations, two violent attacks by the villain and a little misunderstanding involving money entrusted to her by the hero to pay the saddler's bill.) Though the hero is rather a dull stick, or tends to become so in a trilly, there is no real suggestion of parody. The class theme, again a familiar one in Renoir's films, is played straight, almost portentously, and Catherine Hessling's doll-faced performance as the mauled but irrepressible heroine has none of the spontaneity Catherine Rouvel brings to her successor, Nénette, in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*. There, in an idyll of equal improbability, it is the farm girl's natural charm, innocence and determination which gives her every advantage; it is the scientist, the local chatelain, whose class and intellect are gently burlesqued. Twenty-five years separate the social change between these two fairy-tales. Its stages can be traced through Renoir's career, though the class question has rarely been handled urgently by him, and never angrily. Behind the recurring image of the rich man patronising the poor, Stroheim's von Rauffenstein preferring the word of honour of a Boieldieu to that of a Rosenthal or a Maréchal, can be detected sometimes cutting irony, sometimes an almost defiant nostalgia, but never less than a generous, whole-

hearted response to people, whether of the old social order, the new or the one in decline.

3

La Fille de l'Eau pleased many critics of the day. Its dream sequences, with the heroine in flowing white robes floating through gnarled wintry landscapes, between pillars haunted by dragons, and riding horseback behind the hero through cloudy skies, were regarded as very chic and *avant-garde*. A passage of quick rhythmic cutting across the weather-beaten faces of the lynch mob, all in close-up, anticipated various Soviet directors by several years. The film is in fact jealously preserved in the Moscow Archive as one of the greatest in the history of the cinema. Renoir, however, considered it stiff and affected, and the Stroheim *coup de foudre* led him irrevocably away from theories of formalism and the direct copying of nature towards improvisation, re-creation, the exploration of "authentic subjects in the French naturalistic tradition."

This tradition, proceeding from Balzac and Flaubert to Emile Zola, directly or indirectly governed the conception of a growing number of film directors in the Twenties. Thus the spring of Renoir's attitude, following the basically similar attitudes of Stroheim, Pabst, Sjöström and Pudovkin, was to become an exact, truthful and unshrinking observation of nature and man. To Zola, himself governed by the ideas of Hippolyte Taine, vice and virtue were the chemical products of a man's reaction to and upon his environment: man was inseparable from his *milieu*, was determined and completed by his exterior life, from his house and job to his very gestures and the day to day state of the weather. But just as Zola departed from Taine's thesis in his selection of somehow exceptional, often pathological, characters, so in the Thirties Renoir departed from Stroheim's penchant for decadent characters and Pabst's for neurotics. Renoir's murderers are unhappily married bank clerks, gamekeepers and farmers' wives, driven to the extremes of unbearable tensions. His villains are frequently bullies, but never sadists, tricksters but never pathological liars, and sometimes he dispenses with unsympathetic characters altogether.

The history of Renoir's development as a naturalistic filmmaker, from *La Chienne* (1931) and *Toni* (1934) through the period (1935-8) when he suddenly emerged as a popular director with *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *Les Bas-Fonds*, *La Grande Illusion* and *La Bête Humaine*, is a wholly fascinating one. It begins, in *La Chienne*, with an almost purely physio-

logical view of character, a refusal to comment or moralise, a concern with the dominating role in life played by sex, and a statement of facts and behaviour patterns without bias, ulterior meaning, or undue emphasis on mental conflict. The bond between Renoir and Zola, in fact, appears complete. But bit by bit, due to the enforced hiatuses of commercial chores, various rapid changes in popular temper, and the perpetual war within Renoir between a classical view of technique and the demands of a universal spirit of enquiry, the Renoir-Zola bond was eroded. When it pleased him, Renoir restored the old chain-of-coincidences narrative device in place of Zola's natural succession of events; details became improbable, people no longer looked the right schematic type, biased comment crept in, until inevitably—and this is especially noticeable in the Forties and Fifties—Zola's elaborate and calculating passion for order was scattered to the four winds by a goat-herd's pipe and an orgiastic gust of wind.

Renoir once described the coming of sound into the cinema as a sudden and magical transformation, as if someone had opened a secret door of communication between the filmmaker and his audience. Part of the clue to Renoir's unparalleled survival as a naturalistic director is this emphasis on magic and communication at times when both are at a premium: in 1931, when the infuriated producers of *La Chienne* locked him out of the cutting-room in a futile attempt to gild the wholly unfashionable elements of a dark and desperate murder drama; and in 1959, the year of *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* and of scientific, political and TV pulpsters.

Apart from his unshakable faith in his own commitment to the human condition, at the expense as time went on of almost all the rules of the naturalistic tradition, Renoir had two great advantages over contemporary realist directors. The first was his versatility, his ability to shoot his first talkie, a Feydeau farce called *On purge Bébé*, in six days as a sort of test to satisfy his suspicious producers. The second was the virtually pristine freshness of his vision. Where Stroheim, Pabst and Sjöström had fulfilled themselves in the Twenties, either leaving themselves with nothing more to say or lacking the adaptability or even the chance to work satisfactorily in sound, Renoir had managed to make but one attempt at a realistic silent film, *Nana*, and that was almost completely nullified by the familiar presence of Catherine Hessling, an actress of alarmingly unreal personality, in the title role.

Renoir came to *La Chienne* confident with success (*On purge Bébé* cost less than 200,000 francs and made more than a million), ruthless and filled with enthusiasm, both for the sound medium and the subject in hand. He had been longing to film La Fourchardière's novel, about the ruin of a middle-aged bank cashier following a chance meeting with a grasping slut, for over a year. Its Germanic flavour and opportunities for abstracting the fatality of the situation were to ensnare Fritz Lang fourteen years later in *Scarlet Street*, a film which has significantly weathered the passage of time far less well than the earlier version. It is easy enough, today, to see why. For Lang, "atmosphere" is essentially linked to the studio, and the texture of *Scarlet Street*, though brilliant, is no more than decorative. Renoir, however, vigorously shot and recorded his film in a noisy Montmartre where the bourgeoisie live cheek by jowl with racketeers, *souteneurs*, street-singers and taxi-drivers: he introduced his characters visually through the nature of their surroundings. Lang's opening shot of a rainy street by night, with a barrel-organ stressing the Twenties' air of anonymous, studio-bound melancholy and a few strolling couples in Forties' dress immediately hitting an anachronistic note, prepares us for everything that is to follow: Joan Bennett's brave but foredoomed attempt to impersonate a tart, Edward G. Robinson's type-casting as the infatuated clerk, and an external, theoretically established sexual passion of absolutely no tension whatever. Renoir's concentration on

this same relationship, on the other hand, and on the faultless performances of Michel Simon and Janie Marèze, is almost unbearable in its intimacy and Zola-like overtones of animalism. It is doubtful whether any other director, or any other actor except possibly Laughton, could have brought off the scene of Simon's explicitly dog-like vigil over the face of the murdered woman with the degree of tact, economy and empathy which Renoir reserves for this single set-up and dissolve.

The technique throughout seems as remarkable for its restraint and limpidity today as it must have done thirty years ago. There is, for example, the sequence leading up to the discovery of the murder, with the camera outside the house first fixed on a street-singer and his audience, then rising vertically to the window as the pimp climbs upstairs, descending as he descends, only to rise again, when the concierge delivers the post, in time to catch her cries as she pokes her head out of the window. Equally striking is the amount of comedy Renoir fuses into his story. The cashier's shrewish wife, no less monstrous a tyrant than the one in *Scarlet Street*, is much more amusingly played (by Madeleine Bérubet) and affectionately directed, so that the vaudeville interlude of the return of her former husband is integrated into the plot with noticeably less implausibility than in Lang's case. But perhaps the crucial dissimilarity between the two films, and the conceptions governing them, is most clearly indicated by the treatment of the epilogue. Lang shows us a derelict tramp on a snowy Christmas Eve, haunted by his victim's ringing laughter and cringing before neon-lit, Caligariesque hallucinations of fate and guilt. Renoir's tramp is a jaunty, philosophic old personage, a famous painter unawares, an involuntary, undetected murderer, happy to join forces with his wife's first husband in a profitable business opening car doors on the Faubourg St. Honoré. Though neither film is concerned to point a moral judgment, Lang's study of a rancid passion remains petty and artificial, while Renoir's has a commitment to real people and a last, casual salute to life that helps raise it to the level of a masterpiece.

4

Renoir has always been sensitive to the sympathies between collaborators working on a film. Such sympathies are likely, in his case, to become extraordinarily intimate—he talks of "accomplices" rather than collaborators—so that an apparently ordinary fusion of talents leads to a mutual growth of stature. After the commercial disaster of *La Chienne*, which won Renoir a reputation as "*un mauvais coucheur*", Michel Simon formed his own production company and gave Renoir



"Le Crime de Monsieur Lange": Florelle, René Lefèvre and Jules Berry.

the independence he needed in order to direct him in *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux*. Generally written off by film historians as one of four uninteresting commercial chores between *La Chienne* and *Toni* (the others being *La Nuit du Carrefour*, a detective thriller I can still recall with pleasure for its eerie and delicate subtleties of atmosphere, *Chotard et Cie*, which has disappeared, and an unpopular version of *Madame Bovary*), *Boudu* in fact turns out to be a film of such fresh, simple joy and total harmony between actor, director and setting that one can only regard it as a perfect example of collective evolution.

After a slow, deliberately sleepy evocation of Paris and the Seine in June, and the matter-of-fact suicide attempt of a tramp, Boudu, who has lost his dog, the film shakes itself wide-awake with Boudu's irruption all over the household of his rescuer, M. Lestingois. A languid, sensual, middle-aged bookseller with a petulantly refined wife and a maid who is his mistress, Lestingois takes it into his head to feed, clothe and rehabilitate Boudu. Boudu reciprocates by carrying on a brief but startling affair with Mme. Lestingois before becoming engaged to the maid. Finding himself suddenly rich from a lottery and trapped into respectability, Boudu impulsively excuses himself from the wedding breakfast by jumping back in the river. While the others bemoan his death, Boudu surfaces, rolls and blows like a seal, becomes pleasurably aware of the warm August water, the grassy bank and the white dust brought by the breeze and the heat from the road, and decides to stay alive. Landing, lying in the grass, rigging himself out like a dandy in a scarecrow's clothes, he finally acknowledges a pedlar's goat and disappears into the meadow-sweet.

The plot is unexceptionable and indeed comes from a rather tired boulevard farce by René Fauchois. The hazards of its Priapic insinuations, and its recollections of Chaplin, are obvious. At first one is surprised by the patient attention given to realistic detail, the depth of focus of photography across a courtyard from one room to another, the poignant nostalgia of the *quais*, bridges and banks of the Seine; one doubts whether such a dense, tactile surface of defined time and place can stretch over so thin an anecdote without seeming actually superfluous. The heart of the film, however, is Michel Simon's performance, and this is as firm in its hold on recognisable human behaviour as it is outsize in its eccentric improvisations. Whether reclining in the air between the jambs of a door, wrecking a kitchen and a bedroom during the simple operation of polishing his shoes, or lurching shorn from the barbers'

with a wild, preoccupied pride, Simon hovers constantly on the brink of caricature without once threatening one's confidence that one is in the presence of a great actor.

The genial anarchy of the Renoir-Simon "conspiracy" marked the first stage in Renoir's defection from Zolaism. The second came in 1935, with an equally close and improvisatory collaboration between Renoir and the writer, Jacques Prévert, on *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*. Born out of the crucible of popular temper which brought the *Front Populaire* to power, *Monsieur Lange* heralded a period in Renoir's career in which social preoccupations were to colour, if not outweigh, the tenets of traditional realism.

Told in flashback to a group of *habitués* in a café on the Belgian border, the story of *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* concerns a young writer, Amédée Lange, who spends his days feverishly churning out cowboy dime novels to keep his publisher-employer, Batala, out of the bankruptcy courts. One day Batala gives his creditors the slip, surviving a train accident in which everyone believes he has lost his life. Lange now forms his fellow-workers into a co-operative concern, and falls in love with Batala's mistress, Valentine. Batala returns, disguised as a clergyman, to find business flourishing. He immediately makes his intentions clear: to disband the co-operative, take over the reins again and reclaim Valentine. In despair, Lange shoots Batala and flees with Valentine to the border, where Valentine's recital of their troubles so touches her audience that the lovers are helped to escape into Belgium.

The film's most extraordinary quality is its density, its almost perplexing sense of a crowded, unanimously optimistic chorus of small-part players forcing their way into the action. Batala's secretary, the porter, the enormous lady concierge, the little laundress Batala seduces, the young man in hiding whom she loves, the printers, the prostitute Lange casually follows, the tweedy man who picks Valentine up within seconds of Batala's departure—all such everyday presences are drawn into the main plot with a sort of insatiable gregariousness that goes beyond realism into a world of enchantment and *populisme* reminiscent of Clair. The camerawork is equally rich in variety, from the transfixed close-ups of lovers against a wall and the long, motionless duologues on a park bench to the fluidity of the crowd scenes in the publishers' and the square outside.

Nevertheless, *Monsieur Lange* is the first film to marshal Renoir's strengths and weaknesses, often side by side, for inspection. The brilliantly oblique sequence of Lange and the prostitute, for instance, is quickly followed by one of those flat-footed and old-fashioned scenes of sexual menace for which Renoir has retained a surprising taste, with practically no variations, ever since *La Fille de l'Eau*: the villain advances, leering, the helpless little victim retreats, cowering, the camera tracks in like a dentist's drill on a molar, the music rises to a crescendo. Similarly, Batala's return, disguised as a priest, is very unevenly handled. The actual murder, with the camera tracking all round the courtyard, an unexpectedly sudden and muted pistol shot, followed by the yells of an old drunk for a priest to be fetched, is inventive and nicely ironic. Unfortunately its impact has already been somewhat lessened by a background of forced and unconvincing high-jinks from the co-operatives at their celebration party, and by the unnecessarily low-angled lighting of Batala's face during his quarrel with Lange.

Renoir's major films, especially his later ones, have often tended to seem a perverse tangle of compensations. Again and again, one finds passages of charm or delicacy threatened by others of portentous melodrama; and at such times one is forcibly reminded that Renoir once played The Wolf in Cavalcanti's *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*. It would be tempting to try and blame Prévert's scenario for the few false notes in *Monsieur Lange*, but quite unfair. The general excellence of



"Toni": Céelia Montalvan and Max Dalban.

the film is communal, and though one suspects that overt social comment is not Renoir's forte, he has responded to Prévert's biting attack on the Batalas of the world with tremendous verve and humour. Jules Berry's performance as the ignoble publisher is almost as baroque as Simon's in *Boudu*, yet not a whit less human or sympathetic. For all the clinical accuracy of Berry's tortured sadist in *Le Jour se Lève*, I would still trade it in for the same actor's handling of the contract-signing scene in *Lange*, and the wealth of comedy implicit in a bit of business with a temperamental dog, a cigarette, and a fountain-pen.

5

Le Crime de Monsieur Lange was Renoir's first great popular success. Fame, however, and political commitment, and possibly Prévert's influence, appeared to take away more than it gave to his development as a realist director—always excepting the somewhat structureless *La Grande Illusion* (1937). Though *Les Bas-Fonds* won the 1936 Prix Louis Delluc, it failed to translate the Gorki original into anything more relevant than an all-star French pastiche of Chaplin's *Modern Times* (the whole of Junie Astor's performance was modelled on Paulette Goddard) and various bits and pieces from Renoir's previous films (the canal, the beating-up of the girl, the attempted seduction in the pavilion). *La Bête Humaine* (1938) is considerably more to the point, its central relationship being handled with exactly the right amorality and acted compellingly by Simone Simon and Gabin. There are many virtuoso passages of narrative—the two Paris-Havre runs, shot from the footplate; the riverside duologue, held against the skyline, between Lantier and Flore; Séverine's oblique hints at murder as she lies by Lantier's side in bed; her own murder, photographed from the adjoining room; Roubaud's discovery of the body, his back to the camera, standing brokenly and silently weeping in the doorway, the stolen watch hanging from his hand. Yet somehow Kosma's melodramatic score, the artificial lighting and Renoir's passion for sexual symbolism (pipe-water running into an overflow bucket, footsteps in the mud) all detract from the film's stature. Nor does the elaborately constructed and explicitly carnal man-and-machine metaphor survive the slightly embarrassing moment when Gabin (possibly a shade too sophisticated for the role?) strokes his locomotive and expresses his affection for it in words.

For once, in fact, the compensations are just not extraordinary enough. There is too much in *La Bête Humaine* that Spaak and Duvivier might have handled, if not better, then equally as well. It is as though Renoir had assimilated, all too eagerly, the lessons of commercial success which conceivably filtered through to him, however unconsciously, during his collaboration with Prévert and (on *Les Bas-Fonds* and *La Grande Illusion*) Charles Spaak. At any rate, to find the high point in Renoir's development as a realist director, and the film with the strongest personal conception, one must go back beyond the partnership with Prévert to 1934, and *Toni*.

Today accepted as the precursor of neo-realism—and certainly Visconti's debt to Renoir is implicit—*Toni* must have seemed dismayingly revolutionary in its day. Filmed in Les Martigues, a community near Marseilles, without studio sets, make-up or stars (some of the parts were played by people on the spot), the story began as an exhaustive police dossier on a *crime passionnel* that had occurred some ten years previously in the district. Otherwise, it offered Renoir nothing but pitfalls: the need to step right outside his own social milieu; an open invitation to impose an irrelevant pictorial style, bringing out the sort of "picturesque peasant" attitude in which Pagnol's films abound; the difficulties of catching the rhythm of Provençal life without seeming on the one hand monotonous

and slow, on the other to be guilty of the misrepresentations of an incident-bound screenplay.

The screenplay, by Renoir and Carl Einstein, in fact rarely imposed dramatic climaxes on situations which would not have them in real life. Its main virtue was its directness and its concentration upon the leading character, an Italian immigrant, and the two women who love him. The first, with whom Toni has a long-lasting affair, is his landlady, Marie; the second is Josepha, a Spanish immigrant, who eventually marries the Belgian foreman, Albert, from the quarry where Toni works. When, after two years of misery at the hands of a drunken and avaricious brute, Josepha kills her husband, Toni attempts to save her by disposing of the body in the woods. Surprised by a gendarme and arrested, Toni breaks away only to be shot down as he runs across the railway bridge towards the station. A train passes him, arrives and disgorges a new batch of Italian immigrants.

Though melodrama is not entirely avoided—Renoir indulges in a characteristic succession of tracking shots and panic-stricken close-ups during the actual murder—the treatment is otherwise magisterial; refined and ordered to a degree greater than in any of Renoir's other films, so that it stands out against the rest much like *Greed* in relation to Stroheim. Its realism, like that of *Greed*, is never exterior, but always assimilated, an outward projection of the characters and their drama and the landscape in which, rather than against which, they live. Closer to Visconti, however, is the compassion and sensitivity of the observation. The first meeting between Toni and the sensuous Josepha, when he sucks a wasp sting from her back ("Assez, tu profites!"), the sense of a decaying relationship in the bedroom scenes between Toni and Marie, Toni's flight along the railway tracks, with the old man calling vainly after him, then cradling Toni's body in his arms as the train passes and the gendarmes awkwardly stand around—all these scenes are realised with warmth as well as complete understanding.

Much of the film's hypnotic effect springs from its economical, tense yet fluid construction, its development in short, pithy scenes linked by brilliant effects of sound (motor-bike engines, a sudden funeral bell, a guitar and a nocturnal singer) and cutting. This amounts, at times, to an inspired sort of telegraphese. Elsewhere, the camera hovers transfixed over some magnificent (but always spontaneous-seeming) composition: this may be an interior, with two unhappy couples

(Continued on page 154)



Renoir (standing, left of camera) filming the last sequence of "Toni" on the railway tracks.

ROBERT VAS

SHORT—OR DOCUMENTARY

Right: Herman van der Horst
lining up a zoom lens shot
for "Praise the Sea".



"We can, with great satisfaction, confirm the high standard of (short) film production throughout the world." —From the report of the Jury, Oberhausen Short Film Festival, 1960.

"If this is the best of all possible worlds, what are the others?"—Voltaire's *Candide*.

THESE REFLECTIONS ON the condition of documentary were first sketched out, in a somewhat bitter mood, during a winter's night trip from the Ruhr to London. They are based on some experiences gathered at recent short-film festivals, especially the one at Oberhausen; and, before coming to the central point, some necessary facts should be briefly summed up. This festival (or, as it called itself, "Working Film Days") was held at the end of February. There were four screenings daily; the organisation was excellent; the atmosphere informal; the hospitality exemplary. Yet the wide offering of films, which are, after all, the making of a festival, seemed only to add up to an impression of a sad, flat average. The 83 'live action' entries comprised the cream of world production over the last two years, and the collection was rich enough to allow one to draw conclusions from it. What mainly concerns me here, though, is the situation of the personal, social documentary.

"There is no effect without a cause," Dr. Pangloss declared; and this time we can believe him. We were offered a wide and thorough collection of this kind of 'effects'—symptoms of a sort of artistic estrangement by means of which the film-maker can become as detached and impersonal as he chooses. The most straightforward method is the Italian one: they simply avoid going near their subjects. Films by Vancini, Cassadio and Andreassi on fishermen and the unemployed consist almost entirely of long shots. "Stand back and look at the ordinary people—but not *too* hard": to go closer would obviously involve some necessity of immersion. What interests them, though, is just poverty in general, and its splendidly photographic possibilities: big, bare skies, women wrapped in black shawls, tumbledown cottages. The obligatory colour and the ascetic sound-tracks (consisting mainly of harsh natural sounds) lend these pictures a self-conscious air of stylisation. Even in the more refined works by Vittorio de Seta, their simplicity slides off into conscious primitivism, the aristocratic gesture. And if there is such a thing as elegant poverty, it is in these poor man's—or, perhaps, very rich man's—reminders of *La Terra Trema* that we are likely to find it.

The German entries, leaving an equally uniform impression, achieve their brand of detachment through a cold, analytical and rather pedantic brilliance of surface. An art film (Alfred Ehrhardt's *Art of our Time*), a political essay (Kurt Krigar's *Caution! Zone Border 75 Metres*) or a piece of small talk (Herbert Vesely's *Fashion in the City*) all share the same neat, exemplary, professional finish, the same sort of over-argumentative commentary and the same academically executed trick cuts and zoom lens shots.

The zoom lens itself seems to have become another symbol of our times: the cinema's equivalent to automatic transmission, nylon and the jet. To dispose of an active zoom lens is to be in possession of the magic word "art". Even a film-maker such as Herman van der Horst, whose *Praise the Sea* has been widely applauded, falls into the trap. Setting out to discover and glorify an aspect of Dutch life, he ends up, for all the admirable quality of at least one sequence, by displaying and glorifying little more than his own gun-barrel lens, zooming wildly to and fro and turning the flat, and so evocatively monotonous, countryside into a landscape for neurotics.

The mechanical *musique concrète*, so masterly in the way it fills out the surrealist world of a *Dom*, also yields examples of how technique can be used for effects no more than mechanical. The images in Jan Lomnicki's *Steel* round out a simple, well-conceived and realistic picture of workers in industry; but they lose much of their self-contained authenticity when accompanied by a dehumanised sound-track of distorted buzzes, hisses and clicks. The aim, presumably, is to stylise the simplicity of the images into a more "complex", personal framework; but the superficial amalgam of sound and pictures only shows up the gulf between intention and realisation. Similar tricks disfigure Andrzej Munk's *Walk in the Old City of Warsaw*. Here, a powerful, realist director takes a snub-nosed, coy little girl on an excursion, using her as little more than a pretext for his experiments in *musique concrète*. These small children, by the way, personifying innocent purity, turn out to be extremely useful mediums for the expression of sophisticated or pseudo-humanist viewpoints. We saw five samples of such screen children, all subserviently happy or sad, charming or frightened, struggling with shadows or philosophising, according to Uncle Director's wish...

Entries from Russia and Eastern Europe, on the contrary, show an effort for the over-emotional, over-dramatised approach; and again the impression is in the long run

impersonal. The Yugoslav *Prisoner of Stones* (by Bosko Bosković) could have been a moving account of the impoverished inhabitants of a barren mountain settlement; but its convulsive striving for the poetic and dramatic robs it of documentary authenticity and falls flat on its own account. The same ambition to be more poetic than the others is encountered in the Polish R. Stando's *Music at Night*, a fantasy on the Poznan Museum of Old Musical Instruments, which play *bourrées* and *minuettes* by and for themselves when night falls and the museum is closed . . . A Hungarian short, *My Town*, was intended as a warm, poetic confession—without a personality behind the “My” or a portrait of Budapest behind the “Town” . . . “Do you love me?” “I do. Do you?” whisper two silhouetted lovers to each other during their nocturnal walk through Moscow in (again, with pathos) *Our Town in the Morning*. Directed by four graduates of the Moscow Film School, this intercuts shots of the symbolic pair with zealous night shifts in various Moscow factories; and almost every third shot in this coloured piece of hurrah-optimism has something to do with the rising sun.

* * *

This may just seem a list of extremist symptoms. But when you sit four times a day in a darkened theatre, when each “The End” is immediately followed by a new set of credit titles, those suppressed little sighs, astonished hisses and stupefied “Oh my God’s” somehow thicken the “effects” into a single “cause”. They put into words the basic lesson of this festival: that the poetic, personal documentary with a firmly expressed social standpoint has lost its flavour and real emphasis. This is not only a British disease: it is world-wide. The booing with which the audience at the Tours Festival greeted the Grand Prix for *We Are the Lambeth Boys* had hardly died away; and here, at Oberhausen, we again found both film-makers and jury easily disregarding the real face and problems of life. “So what . . . ?” one feels like asking, with a shrug, as the images fade and the lights go up—for there is no real artistic passion, no sympathetic humility in these pictures. Whom should they respond to, and why? All their makers want is to sell the pictures, or, on the other side, to salvage something out of a permitted, “useful” half-truth.

Or can one believe that Kurt Krigar is expressing a thoughtful viewpoint about the absurdity of the two Germanies, when his symbolic child bursts into an ear-splitting cry (through the echo chamber) as his (again symbolic) ball falls over the barbed wire into East Germany? What kind of response is it that dwells on poverty and dignity through a story about the poorest little boy in the fishing village (Andreassi's *The Macaroni*) who cannot obtain his great dream—a plateful of macaroni—but wipes his face with tomato sauce to show his chums proudly that he *has* eaten? When Herbert Viktor, one of the ‘names’ of German documentary, sets out to interpret the people and spirit of Oberhausen itself, the result is some patronising candid camera shots of “people out shopping” and some gleaming, polished pieces of coal on the conveyor belt. *Buenos Aires*, a small and well-meaning Argentinian venture, alternates shots of slums and skyscrapers, thus reminding us that there *are* rich people and also poor people. Even *Skyscraper*, that much praised American documentary, reveals at a second viewing that behind its racy, jazzy approach to work and workmen is a kind of pooh-poohing condescension. “Look at those builders,” it seems to say. “Aren't they *really* clever that they don't fall down . . .”

When so much is superficial, even the smallest fragment of truth seems to jump out of the screen. The seemingly insignificant and narrow world of Jacques Rozier's *Blue Jeans* becomes remarkably tangible thanks to the warm informality of the film's approach. *Tokyo 1958* has genuine anger, even if it comes through in a rather crude, impure way; and the American *Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?*, another “amateur” production, makes an odd though fitting comment on modern mechanisation.



Above: the fashionable realism of “Skyscraper”. Below: poetry and personality expressed through factual accuracy . . . Robert Snyder's “A Visit with Pablo Casals”.

It is worth noting, too, that the most popular and convincing pictures were often those—narrower, and simplified in scope, but still at least unvulgar—which took no viewpoint at all but tackled their subjects through an overwhelmingly factual approach. Watching Jacques Villeminot's crisp *Les Hommes Oubliés*, about an Australian tribe, or Jean Claude Bourdier's reportage on a staggering *Rite Unique au monde*; floating in the air with the parachutists of *Des Hommes dans le Ciel*; or following the camera into the glowing interior of a blast furnace in Japan's *Symphony of Steel* . . . in each case, there was the sheer visual magic of being *present*.

Some pictures of this kind carry the mark of television's quickly sketched actualities, making one wonder to what extent TV now swallows up the social film documentary, exchanging its tone, imperceptibly, for the small change of more immediately topical material. We do, after all, live in an era of reportage. Or is this apparent decline of the more thought-out, composed film documentary closely related to the gradual, hopeful unfolding of a genuine style of TV documentary? Many short-film makers turn gladly to television—the risks are fewer and the financial possibilities better. At the same time, one must remember that in the last few years a whole generation of the most distinguished European shorts' directors (Resnais, Franju, Haanstra, Baratier, Peter Weiss, Robert Menegoz, Karel Reisz, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard) have gone over to feature territory.





One of the many contemporary film children: "A Walk in the Old City of Warsaw".

The indifference of the present documentarists to social issues might seem part of a world-wide atmosphere of insecurity and superficiality. We live in a world where to get to the core of any problem, even a seemingly insignificant question of detail, is immediately likely to imply a chain of complicated issues and inferences. Rather than become absorbed in such issues, such complications, film-makers choose the easier way and confine themselves to trying to capture a fashionable, immaterial fragment of the contemporary scene. Their retreat from reality is encouraged by a regrettable shortage of creative, enterprising sponsorship, both private and governmental. And, as even the shortest film becomes more and more expensive to make, the risks become correspondingly greater.

We ought, too, to raise the question of whether there now exists a really appreciative, world-wide audience for documentaries immersed in their subjects and responsible in their attitudes. They gave a rough reception to the one they saw at Tours (where, two years previously, *Every Day Except Christmas* was rejected for showing because "nothing happens in it"); and, going by reactions of the Jury and press, the Oberhausen audience did not feel they were missing anything. All this, and many more reasons, seems to be sending a flourishing and influential film movement into a gradual decline, reducing the short film to the status of a "supporting programme" forced to accept the challenge of commercial cinema. Occasionally, something with an extra quality of popular appeal—a goldfish, a comedian—will, in this country, suddenly be raised from oblivion into the professional category of a "featurette". And critics, seeing these, suddenly realise with a pleasant sense of surprise that short films *do* still exist.

As technical perfection becomes a basic aim, some of the vitality seems to go out of documentary. The 16mm. gauge, that onerous, involuntary but indispensable promoter of artistic freedom, is also becoming less welcome or (as happened this year at Mannheim) is excluded from international festivals.* At Oberhausen, one could sadly contrast the competition films we saw in the afternoons with the morning's retrospective programmes: shorts by Vigo and Carné, Grierson and Jennings, recalling a time when the discovery of a new camera angle and of the slums of Nice went side by side. It is this sudden, cheerful decision to pull out a camera and capture life which is lacking in today's careful films . . . One would welcome, even, a little bit of innocent amateurism, a camera which shook a little.

* * *

The familiar term "experimental cinema" now usually suggests, oddly enough, a purely formal type of experiment: more often than not, it means nothing more than the calculated evasiveness of the abstract film. A vast number of such pictures come from America, and of them it can be said that if a film of this kind wants to be "beat", then it will be *extremely* beat. Glittering shapes, lines and spots, often scratched straight on to the celluloid; films cut from stills, none of them longer than a second; superimposed negative images . . . sometimes the result is a bewilderingly distorted, inhuman chaos, sometimes a graceful, innocent trifle (like Shirley Clarke's *Bridges-go-round*). In these films, however, personality becomes subordinate to eccentricity, opinion is replaced by negation, and we are back with the "fashionable, immaterial fragment". A misty, highbrow commentary to *The Work of Calder* tells us that those abstract cut-out sculptures which dangle on threads from the studio ceiling belong to the artist's "own, private sky" . . . And this sounds like an *ars poetica* for all these pictures. This is truly private property, an isolated territory of 'Art' strictly for the initiated. Unauthorised persons keep out!

Abstraction may, of course, be a perfectly legitimate form of expression. But mastery of it requires either the versatile talent or the self-mocking charm of a McLaren. Without such qualities, we are left with no more than the bare gesture—often an alienating, aloof one—and a sense of, "well, we can (Continued on page 155)

* The San Francisco Festival authorities have now announced their decision to include a special competition for 16mm. films.

Primitivism and simplicity. A frame (left) from Catone Ramello's "1958", nihilistic and remote; and Miro Bernat's "Butterflies do not Live Here", one of the most warm-hearted and personal short films of recent years.





by CECILE STARR

Miss Starr, who writes regularly for the "Saturday Review of Literature" about non-theatrical and 16mm. activities in the United States, will be contributing a series of articles to SIGHT AND SOUND on aspects of the American cinema as seen from the vantage point of New York.

IVAN THE TERRIBLE, PART II, which opened in New York this past winter, died a quick and quiet death. This last impressive work of Sergei Eisenstein is the latest victim of the most dreadful fate that can befall a serious, un-sexy film in this country: an out-and-out "pan" in *The New York Times*.

New York, unlike other capital cities of the world, is essentially a one-newspaper town as far as political reporting and arts criticism are concerned. In film this extends so far that one publicity man has told me that by one p.m. on the day the reviews appear he can look at the box-office line-up outside the Radio City Music Hall (our largest and most touristy movie theatre) and know immediately whether the *Times'* review was favourable or unfavourable. Such lopsidedness is deplorable in the best of circumstances, but these are far from the best.

The superficial reviewing that many important films have received in the *Times* has long been a subject of discussion among film people here. Nor is it merely a matter of local concern, since a film which fails in New York—a serious film, that is—has little chance of achieving success elsewhere in the country. The case of *Ivan the Terrible, Part II*, provides impressive evidence in the case against *The New York Times*.

Bosley Crowther, chief film critic of *The New York Times* and author of *The Lion's Share* and the best-selling *Hollywood Rajah* (respectively, a history of the M-G-M studios and biography of its long-time potentate, Louis B. Mayer), opened his review of *Ivan, Part II* with the opinion that the withholding of the film for twelve years was a service both to the U.S.S.R. and to Eisenstein. Recalling Part I as "a monumental sort of film," Mr. Crowther felt that Part II appeared "to have been made from pieces of it picked up from the cutting room floor." (In his first review of *Pather Panchali*, he showed similar appreciation of film-making with this memorable sentence: "Any picture as loose in structure or as listless in tempo as this one is would barely pass as a 'rough cut' with the editors in Hollywood." This film, however, managed to achieve a five-month first-run in New York, during which Mr. Crowther somewhat begrudgingly modulated his tune.)

Although Mr. Crowther's review stated quite flatly that *Ivan, Part II* was basically "a series of slowly paced scenes", oddly enough it failed to mention the unforgettable dance sequence with its rapid-fire movement and cutting, failed indeed to mention the existence of Eisenstein's first and only colour sequences. "The place for this last of Eisenstein's pictures," Mr. Crowther concluded, "is in a hospitable

museum." Time is the hospitable museum in which this film will find its place.

The *Times'* chief journalistic competitor, *The New York Herald Tribune*, called the release of *Ivan, Part II* "an historic event" and proceeded with a careful analysis of its style and content. The reviewer, Paul V. Beckley, found in *Ivan* excellent evidence that "naturalism is not the single suitable style for film." In his weekly comment the following Sunday, Mr. Beckley called *Ivan* "brilliant picture-making", and concluded that Eisenstein's conception of the man "has a life of its own apart from that of the historical figure. It is not an imitation. It is."

The outsider may very well wonder why this strong review would have less influence than the weak one in the *Times*. People here ask the same thing. Is it because the people who read Mr. Crowther have faith in his judgments and follow his advice? Or is it the *Times* which inspires some of the faith and influence Mr. Crowther has exerted during his twenty year stint as chief film critic of so illustrious a newspaper?

Other factors may play a part. One is *The New York Herald Tribune's* practice of printing shallow promotion articles about films-in-the-making and finished films; the *Times* rarely does this, and then only when the article carries the by-line of an important author or director. It is entirely consistent with the *Times'* policies that it has kept its man on the job completely free of commercial pressures. Is it likely to respond any differently to complaints, such as this, that its film reviews do not always reach a level of insight which *Times'* readers have a right to expect?

Some of the magazine reviewers here were as peeved as Bosley Crowther that Eisenstein's film did not offer the usual appeals. Hollis Alpert, alternate reviewer (with Arthur Knight) in *The Saturday Review*, granted that the film is "done in a style that is supposedly monumental". He was bothered by the presence of "much rolling of the eyes by leading Soviet actors", but failed to notice, for example, the huge symbolic eye which appeared on the wall behind Ivan in several key scenes. He ended with regret that Eisenstein "could not have left behind something more fascinating as a final work." (Arthur Knight, who would almost certainly have written a more perceptive account of *Ivan II*, by-passed the occasion by opting to review *Ben-Hur* the following week.)

Dwight Macdonald, now regular film reviewer for *Esquire*, replaces Kingsley Amis, who left as his final piece a cheerless attack on the "cinematic bores" who favour "peasant sagas of high documentary" (presumably *Pather Panchali*) and who maintain that the golden age of film as an art ended when sound began (*Battleship Potemkin*, *Birth of a Nation*, *The Italian Straw Hat* and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* he cites as his special *bêtes noires*). Mr. Macdonald in his opening review volunteered that he fitted the description to a T, and took over

from there. His comments about *Ivan II*, however, did him little credit in that direction. Mr. Macdonald found the film "ambiguous as propaganda and as art . . . damnably Formalistic." Long paragraphs are given to isolating the homosexual aspects of the film ("Of the eleven leading roles, only one is female—the witchlike Euphrosinia") and to matching political figures in the film with the real ones in Stalin's Russia ("Ivan is the determined leader of the Russian people against their foreign and domestic enemies; his Oprichnika is the GPU; the boyar nobles are the kulaks and other bourgeois elements, and they join with the church in working against Ivan-Stalin"). These observations certainly have bearing on the film, but Mr. Macdonald's review almost turns them into the film itself, as the psychologist's interpretation of a series of ink blot tests too often becomes the patient.

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WHATEVER GROUND EISENSTEIN LOST in the last year was gained many times over by Ingmar Bergman. With a cover story in *Time*, feature articles in *Life*, *Esquire*, *Playboy*, *The Saturday Review*, and many highbrow "little" magazines, Bergman has been easily the most written-about and talked-about director of the past decade. Since the opening of *The Seventh Seal* (which received a dismal review in *The New York Times* and was a box-office flop on its first showing), probably half the art theatres in New York have been playing Bergman films half the time. If this is too far-fetched, I'm sure to be right in saying that the Rugoff & Becker art theatre chain, which has launched most of the Bergman films here, had never before known such continued prosperity from the camera of one director. Many lesser theatres in New York and elsewhere have found large audiences willing to stand in long lines to get inside, a phenomenon which in recent years only Brigitte Bardot has been able to achieve. (Bergman and Bardot have also in common a seemingly endless number of titles, old and new, good and bad, with which to tempt these audiences.)

The "new wave" from France has also been bringing people into New York art theatres. *Les Amants*, *Les Quatre Cents Coups*, *Les Cousins*, and even *Orfeu Negro*, which rightly has no place in this group, played successful runs and were given varied, but certainly interested, reviews. At this writing,

Hiroshima, Mon Amour has just opened with sensational reviews and every indication of a long standing-room only engagement. *The New York Times*' review by A. H. Weiler (Mr. Crowther was covering the Cannes Festival) showed enthusiasm by calling it "a compelling *tour de force*", but "stated at the outset" that "the viewer needs patience in order to appreciate the slow but calculated evolvment of the various levels of the film's drama." The other papers were out-and-out raves, and since all the reviews gave indications of strong sexuality and a kind of end-of-the-world desperation, the film will certainly arouse the curiosity of many people in addition to the regular film enthusiasts.

The British have been best represented by *Room at the Top*, which last year did tremendous business at a leading art theatre, followed by an equally successful tour of the neighbourhood circuits; it got fine reviews, and, of course, an Oscar for Simone Signoret, whose name is now a household invocation. *Look Back in Anger*, in many respects as fine a film, inexplicably did no business at all and got dreary reviews almost all around. Right now a new trend is starting with the airy comedies of Peter Sellers, whose name a few months back was completely unknown and who has three or four films running simultaneously at any given time.

It has been, and is being, a busy and exciting year for art theatres in New York—and all the more so since the big Broadway houses are showing one Hollywood dud and superdud after another, with only an occasional hit of the calibre of *Some Like It Hot*, which after all isn't saying very much.

The success of so many foreign films has put the spotlight on the Rugoff & Becker chain, which shows promise of becoming what film-makers have dreamed of—an art theatre network which can reach sufficiently large audiences across the country to pay substantial returns to producers without having to depend on the Loew's or RKO circuits. Rugoff & Becker, in addition to owning or co-owning twelve New York theatres and four outside the city, also serves as booking and buying agent for twenty-three art theatres in other cities. Two of their New York theatres, the Beekman and the handsome new Murray Hill (where *Ivan II* had its brief opening run), also serve as Sunday morning meeting places for the Cinema 16 Film Society.

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TO INSURE HIS LATEST film getting a long opening run, film-maker Lionel Rogosin has bought a small theatre of his own in Greenwich Village. A policy of repertory programming has been announced for the future; but right now, the programme is limited to *Come Back, Africa*, for as long as possible, and after that Rogosin's first film, *On the Bowery*, will be shown.

The idea of a repertory film theatre, which will show and show again significant films which lack sustained box-office potentialities for even small art theatres, is indeed an exciting one. Cinema 16 performs part of this job by presenting such films as *Shadows*, *The Cry of Jazz*, and many little-known foreign films; however, after a film has been shown to C-16 members in one set of monthly programmes (there are usually five or six presentations), it is not likely to be shown again. Lionel Rogosin's new Bleecker Street Cinema could be a much-needed showcase for the off-Beatnik film, of which we have reason to expect more in the future.

Last year's efforts to establish a Film Center at the Manhattan YMHA, along the lines of its popular Poetry Center,

Lionel Rogosin's "*Come Back, Africa*".



provide some lessons to anyone who wants to run successful showings of out-of-the-ordinary films. One problem at the "Y" was that in attempting to appeal both to small audiences of cinema enthusiasts and to large audiences of interested outsiders, the programmes never became vital and exciting to either group. Film-makers who might have had a wild time talking with an audience of thirty or forty people were put on a stage before three or four hundred, and both sides suffered proportionately. Double-bills of Russian silent films were presented, when two showings of the same film would have brought more people (and more income) and would have found them less exhausted for the next showing. Finally, within four or five months, the Film Center at the "Y" had shot its bolt. It simply was no more.

A further development along these lines is taking place this summer at an uptown art theatre, newly decorated and under the management of Daniel Talbot (editor of *Film: an Anthology*). Mr. Talbot has announced that, along with the theatre's regular revival policy, a ten-week Monday evening film society series will include *Triumph of the Will*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Unknown Soldier*, *Freaks*, *Shadows*, *Intolerance*, *Greed*, *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. These last five silent films will be shown with piano accompaniment by Arthur Kleiner, who is known, in New York at least, as accompanist for the Museum of Modern Art's silent film programmes. This brings to mind the regrettable but all-too-true realisation that the Museum's own film activities have lately lessened in effectiveness, originality and frequency so as almost to have come to a halt. An interesting programme of Polish films this May is one of its few important showings in several years—and even this follows the showing of most of the same films last year at the University of California at Los Angeles, and the screening of several of them at Cinema 16 this past season.

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A NEW AMERICAN FILM which I feel will interest many people outside the U.S. is Bert Stern's *Jazz on a Summer's Day*. It's a lively documentary on the Jazz Festival which has taken place for several years at Newport, Rhode Island. This is Mr. Stern's first film, but he comes to the movie camera as one of the most successful still photographers working in commercial advertising. The fascinating portions of his film are



"Jazz on a Summer's Day": Anita O'Day.

those which merely present performances by such noted and diverse entertainers as Anita O'Day, Chico Hamilton and his Trio, Gerry Mulligan, Louis Armstrong, and Mahalia Jackson, among others. The film's excursions into the sail-boat setting of Newport, into a young people's beer and jitter-bug session, into spontaneous-looking (but many obviously contrived) shots of audience reaction, are varied in style but not particularly successful. One brilliant exception is the brief, dimly-lit sequence of a cellist practising a classical composition back in his room.

In his best sequences, Bert Stern did many of the wrong things for the right reasons; the results give the first true and exciting record of outstanding jazz performers. Intense facial close-ups (with little or no footage of feet, by the way), medium shots looking direct into the stage lights (their flare and colour providing much of the vitality of the shots), serve to accent the music and the performance in a way that professional filmmakers would have avoided as much as possible. In the latest *Film Culture*, Mr. Stern is quoted as saying: "The trouble with Hollywood is, they're always correcting the colour. They never leave it alone!" In *Jazz on a Summer's Day*, he has done more than leave it alone; he's made it sing.

THE SEVENTH ART

INFALLIBLE TEAR-JERKER and seat-edge thriller . . . and heaven-sent woman's picture. . . Gets the best dramatically and commercially out of the Catholic and Jewish religions, has many highlights, including scenes of Jewish children too terrified to talk. (Reviews for Showmen of *Conspiracy of Hearts*, *Kinematograph Weekly*.)

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To ban it is to deprive Manchester filmgoers from seeing the most moral, sermonising film since Cecil B. DeMille's Biblical series came to an end. (Report on *The Savage Eye* in *The Guardian*.)

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U-I, currently reaping b.o. riches from both *Pillow Talk* and *Operation Petticoat*, yesterday filed with the MPAA Registration Bureau the title of *Pillows and Petticoats*. Only one problem remains: somebody has to come up with a story. (*Hollywood Reporter*.)

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Patrons at many American theatres playing *The Last Voyage* will receive a special handkerchief called a "Nerv-a-Chief" when they

buy their tickets. The "Nerv-a-Chief" bears the message: "To relieve tension, twist while watching *The Last Voyage*." (*Screen, India*.)

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Two extracts from GO-GET-EM-INNERS, *A Kitful of Stunts for Showmen*, "Motion Picture Herald."

PIE THROWING CONTEST: Using a piece of cardboard about 4 x 4 with a hole in it large enough for someone to get his head through, dress one of your attendants up like a clown and have him stick his head through this hole. Pick out 12 women and 12 men to throw cream pies at his face and give prizes for those who hit him in the face.

MAN BURIED ALIVE: This stunt is put on by Dr. Franklin, 239 West Euclid, Springfield, Ohio. The man is actually buried in a casket in a regular size grave and covered up for four days. There is a tube at the head of the grave and your patrons can look down and see that he is actually in the casket. The man is hypnotized before he is put in the casket in front of your patrons and he is awakened at a midnight show. This will really set your town to talking.

Film Reviews

SERGEANT RUTLEDGE and THE UNFORGIVEN

THERE MAY BE NO WHOLLY new subjects left for the Western, but there are still a few blank spaces to be filled in on the screen's gigantic map of the West. Ford's latest film, *Sergeant Rutledge* (Warners) stumbles on one of them: the history of the Negro regiment, the 9th Cavalry, formed soon after the Civil War to join in the last frontier battles with the Indians. To the Negroes, in 1881, the White House is still "the place where Mr. Lincoln lives"; slavery is a living memory; loyalty to the regiment, if we are to believe Ford, has become a fierce, fighting expression of racial pride.

It is a theme which carries echoes and reverberations, a subject too intriguing in its own right to be smothered beneath our own modern reactions to questions of race prejudice and so made the material for an up-to-date polemic. What did these men think of the cause they were fighting for; of their officers; of those bleak Arizona battlefields where they engaged the Indian war-parties? But these are not the questions Ford raises in his film. His immediate dramatic theme is the court-martial of Sergeant Rutledge (Woody Strode), himself the embodiment of military pride and loyalty, on a double charge of rape and murder. In flashback, prosecutor (Carleton Young) and defence counsel (Jeffrey Hunter) elicit the evidence: a night in a deserted, storm-shaken railroad station, when Rutledge saves a white girl's life; the long, hard chase across the plains after an Apache war-party, with Rutledge riding to the rescue of his troop; the details of the murder itself. The winding up is perfunctory, with a sudden confession of guilt, and Rutledge is saved to march by, incongruously grinning, while defence counsel and heroine embrace.

There is a perfunctoriness about the whole film, in the maddeningly casual, take it as you find it manner of latter-day Ford. The script, by Willis Goldbeck and James Warner Bellah, allows witnesses to give evidence of events at which they were not present; the trial

meanders backwards and forwards. Billy Burke flutteringly intervenes; her husband, the presiding officer at the court-martial, mops his face, clicks his false teeth, bellows for whisky. As so often with Ford, the comedy, at the outset entertaining, gets out of hand. At the back of the courtroom's fan-waving audience of station wives are a group of men out for a lynching, brandishing their home-made nooses. But Ford is too genial about the whole business to leave much scope for tension. In the action scenes, the Negro soldiers are easily absorbed into his own passionate loyalty to the cavalryman—any cavalryman—in his blue jacket. He poses them heroically against the skyline; he ensures that they die bravely; he lets them grin and swagger. He seems to like them almost as much as he likes the Irish. But, while Ford's Irish now need no explaining, the casual approach here discloses too little.

Yet, of course, there are moments when everything is working for the director: the opening, with the bustling arrival at the cavalry post and the quick, firm establishment of the scene; the girl's arrival at the bleak little station, and Rutledge's sudden appearance out of the night; the Indian fighting; the slow, sombre darkening of the courtroom as the first flashback begins. Ford's knowledge of how to place and manoeuvre an action scene seldom deserts him. His escapes into man-to-man sentimentality, his taste for bad jokes, his utterly careless attitude to some of his players (the store scene, introducing the murdered girl, is atrociously played), are inseparable from his qualities as a film-maker. Ford still writes the poetry of heroes; it is the prose of *Sergeant Rutledge* that he has neglected.

Prose has always been John Huston's medium, and it is a coincidence that his first Western, also concerned with a racial issue, should come out at the same time as Ford's latest. *The Unforgiven* (United Artists) dwarfs *Sergeant Rutledge* in size. Consciously—as consciously as George Stevens in *Shane*—Huston seems to have set out to make an epic romantic Western. His introduction is pastoral and lyrical: the girl (Audrey Hepburn) riding away from the lonely little ranch-house, off into an infinitely wide landscape. A mysterious stranger, silent, sabre-rattling, a tired figure on a tall horse, threatens the family peace. And the climax comes with the revelation that the girl is in fact an Indian, adopted after a raid, with the family's refusal to give her up, the neighbours' bitter resentment of an action which may endanger them all, and the final siege of the ranch-house by an Indian war-party. The script, adapted by Ben Maddow from a novel by Alan LeMay, reverses the situation of an earlier LeMay novel, *The Searchers*. There a white girl had been adopted by Indians, and there was never any question but that the whites should have her back again.

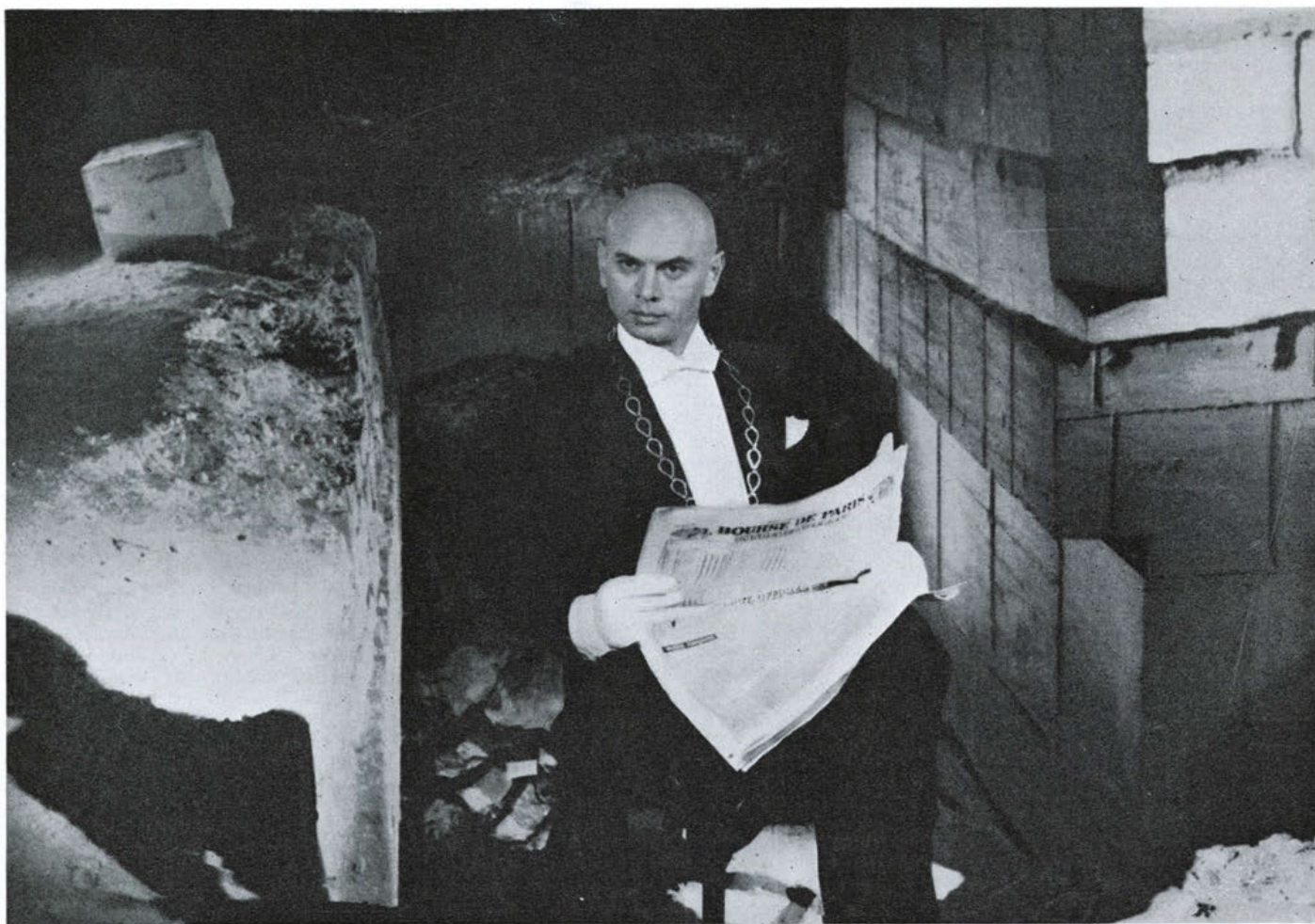
Huston has cast his film ambitiously, with Burt Lancaster and Audie Murphy playing the Zachary brothers, a fine, no-nonsense pioneering mother performance from Lillian Gish, and a spirited attempt to adjust her style to her surroundings from Audrey Hepburn. His cameraman, Franz Planer, has given the film a superb visual quality, so that the little turf-roofed house, with the river in front and the mountains beyond, seems the true centre of a heroic landscape. Scenes in Huston's Western—the pursuit of the stranger through a dust-storm, among the twisted cactus plants; Lillian Gish playing the piano outside the beleaguered ranch, as a reply to the Indian war music—are grandly judged. Yet one often feels the sense of effort: here is a prose stylist trying to haul himself up by his bootstraps to achieve the romantic quality, the poetic surge, demanded by his theme. Where *Shane* succeeded in being almost as large as Stevens' conception of it, *The Unforgiven* falls easily into portentiousness, the director's grasp becomes flaccid. Tautness and terseness went out of Huston's films some time ago, and he has yet to find a replacement.

What draws *Sergeant Rutledge* and *The Unforgiven* finally together is their use of the race problem. Questions of colour are at the basis of both plots, in that Rutledge would not have felt the need to run if he had not been a Negro, and the Zacharys' predicament is the direct consequence of racial prejudice. Neither film shows any liking for the Indians, who are mown down in a couple of grand-stand fights. Neither film has anything to say about colour which goes beyond the self-evident. But the colour problem has become a theme that haunts the American cinema, and there is the sense of a nagging conscience in the way films like these repeatedly and repetitiously return to it.

PENELOPE HOUSTON



"Sergeant Rutledge".



"Le Testament d'Orphée": Yul Brynner plays Minerva's doorman.

LE TESTAMENT D'ORPHEE

EATING UP THE ROAD in loping, weightless strides, a frail and compelled old man descends a dip in the path where it curls around wind-swept cliffs. A black centaur stalks by in the opposite direction. Neither makes any sign, but each pauses and looks over his shoulder, the old man obviously fascinated, the centaur through a dark, seductive eye. The centaur removes his head-piece, and reveals the sulky good looks and heavy shoulders of a swarthy young man. The old man senses that he is being lured into a trap, and continues on his way.

Reminiscent of the account of the young painter in Gide's *Journals*, who pestered Gide with flattering and importunate letters until he was driven to write back impatiently "I am an old man, too old for that, too busy . . .", this early scene from *Le Testament d'Orphée* (Gala) communicates something of the sense of purpose and finality underlying the whole film. It is, in fact, Cocteau's swansong, and completes a thirty-year-long obsessional cycle, from the manifesto of *Le Sang d'un Poète* and the actual execution of *Orphée* to the explication of *Le Testament d'Orphée*, with a shape and symmetry unique in the cinema.

Like the first film, the last begins with the poet (played by Cocteau himself wearing one of Harpo Marx's more dedicated facial expressions) in an eighteenth century wig; otherwise fully dressed and still lost in time and space. In a series of callous, tight-lipped little encounters, awkwardly handled to suggest his discomfort out of the continuum, Cocteau frightens an inventor at various periods in his life—to death, out of his nurse's arms on to his infant head, and so on—until he catches the scientist at the right moment and persuades him to shoot him to life. Proceeding like a sleepwalker through the eerie, summer calm of a Provençal ghost town, Cocteau meets a band of Camargue gypsies, developing a photograph in a fire; Cégeste, who rises from the torn fragments of that photograph when cast into the sea; the rogatory tribunal, also from *Orphée*, only

this time with the Princess and Heurtebise condemned to act as its judges; Minerva, encased in a frogman's suit, who dramatically rejects his offer of the Flower of Folly by transfixing him with her spear; the Sphinx and, in one unexpectedly moving moment when each passes without a sign of recognising the other, Oedipus-Marais; finally two motor-cyclists, not messengers of death but police patrolmen, deflected from asking for Cocteau's autograph by a car-load of speeding young people. A burst of jazz from the car blows Cocteau's identity card away, and he vanishes into thin air.

Though this labyrinth of dream associations, latent memories, myth and materialism (Cocteau's paintings and his film *Orphée*, as well as many of his friends, make appearances) is closest to *Le Sang d'un Poète* in pattern, it is considerably more successful. Familiarity and time have lent clarity to some of the symbols; others are disarmingly obvious—as Cocteau approaches Minerva, the disembodied voice of an air stewardess instructs him to fasten his safety-belt, and when a few seconds later he "dies", we hear the roar of jets. The stylistic problems involved in the use of the same subjective approach as the earlier film have also been largely by-passed. The material has been shaped into a considerable degree of dramatic unity by the powerfully evocative locations of twilight pillars and ruins, shot with feeling and sharpness by Roland Pontoizeau; and though the spiritual strip-tease method of revelation remains very much a matter of personal taste and sympathy (not everyone, after all, longs to meet an *homme-cheval* on a lonely road), Cocteau now displays his fetishes with a wit and candour and darts of self-parody which are positively enchanting. Giving way to a pet of childish fury when he finds that in sketching the Flower of Folly he has drawn a self-portrait, screaming "Merde!" and grinding the flower to ash with an elegant suede shoe, he quickly perks up by donning his D.Litt.(Oxon) robes in order to reassemble Folly's petals. Later, meeting an elegant Dame Distracte also lost in time, he tactfully shrugs off the presence of the two near-naked young men disporting themselves in her garden with a mildly bemused "Drôles de chiens!"

It is a pity, in such a deeply personal work, that Cocteau's linking commentary should have been dubbed in this country by a voice as heartily and incongruously avuncular as Michael Goodliffe's: as it is, the film already suffers from Cocteau's inability to pace the timing of his actors', and particularly his own, performances. Of the roster of friends who have crowded to wave Cocteau farewell (Edouard Dermit, Daniel Gélin, Nicole Courcel, Picasso, Lifar, Henri Crémieux as the scientist, and many others), only Yul Brynner hits the right hard, no-nonsense, sardonically professional note as Minerva's politely obstructive flunkey. One is especially sorry to see Casarès and Périer, brilliantly mannered and trembling with a sense of occasion, condemned to an interminable recital of empty and affected aphorisms in the tribunal sequence. But, apart from this one major lapse, the impression one carries away from *Le Testament d'Orphée* is one of generosity, gaiety and lightness: the lightness of autumn leaves, the gaiety of an absurdly youthful old man, and the generosity of an artist who has at last found peace and contentment in the company of those who love him.

PETER JOHN DYER

THE CHAPLIN REVUE

AS OVERTURE TO HIS three "early films", Chaplin shows a charming document of Hollywood in 1918, the apparently effortless rise of his new studio, and a glimpse of a preliminary rehearsal (actually for *Sunnyside*). After commenting on these he says, mock-serious, "And now I shall retreat behind a screen of silence," to give us the idea that his only modern intrusion on the coming films will be his pleasantly unobtrusive score. Perhaps *The Gold Rush* reissue was instructive to him.

The Chaplin Revue (United Artists) brings back to public screens three films that for more than thirty years now we could not have been sure we were seeing in a state close to their original condition: *A Dog's Life*, *Shoulder Arms* and *The Pilgrim*. The first two were the first on the new full independence of his First National contract, and *The Pilgrim* was the last film on that contract before Chaplin, Pickford, Fairbanks and Griffith were inspired to form their own company, United Artists. Each of these films was praised in its time and in our fallible memories as the perfect film comedy, each as Chaplin's masterpiece. Theodore Huff warns us, "It is impossible to designate a 'best' Chaplin. Motion pictures, like other creations, look different in each period through changes in intellectual and emotional climates." Less true, perhaps, of Chaplin's films than of any others. Seeing the three together like this (almost too rich an experience), it is still impossible to choose. I am drawn to the minimum plot and maximum characterisation in *A Dog's Life*, but I could understand another reviewer preferring the more rapid fire of gags in *Shoulder Arms*, or the astonishingly undisguised (for

now as well as then) satire in *The Pilgrim*. All share with Chaplin's other films this fused milieu of memories of England and observations of America, whether slum, trench or village. Even in *Shoulder Arms*, "our boys" might as well have had Kennington as Brooklyn homes. But the churchgoers of *The Pilgrim* seem almost entirely American and acidly observed.

At the risk of driving anti-Chaplinites over the edge, I must mention some of the delights of these three minor masterpieces (though "minor" may not be just to *A Dog's Life*): the parallel images of tramp and mongrel that move along unforced and inescapable; Charlie's toying with the menace of cops; the beautiful hands that are given a scene to themselves; the parodies of western and pastoral idyll; the sermon in *The Pilgrim* (which Huff tells us was the seed of the whole film); the rare and modern portrait of a child's wickedness, our joy in the retributory kick, and the exactly right ending for each sequence. These are all expressions of an art and a skill that we must learn to treasure, if we haven't already, at all opportunities. *The Chaplin Revue* is such an opportunity. One possibly accidental value that I never noticed before—to see the firm centre of the Charlie character grow firmer as the multiple roles of his surrounding stock company, the changing masks of Sid Chaplin, Henry Bergman and Albert Austin, shift and swirl around the Charlie hub. One far from accidental beauty is the classic conclusion to *The Pilgrim* and to the whole programme: Charlie's slowness to understand that the sheriff is trying to help him escape, and his final fear of both sides of the border and effort to avoid both sets of dangers.

Between *Shoulder Arms* and *The Pilgrim* came Chaplin's first feature film, *The Kid*, and other shorter films that are better than contemporary critics found them: *Sunnyside*, *A Day's Pleasure*, *The Idle Class* and *Pay Day*—making us hope that at least two more reissue pleasures are waiting in the queue to hear the reception of this (first?) "Revue". *The Kid* and a second bundle? Looking back from the lofty position of the present, some critics regard Chaplin's First National period as "fatal", leading to the artistic disasters of *A Woman of Paris*, *The Gold Rush*, *The Circus* and the like. See for yourselves now, and make your own analysis.

These films for First National are the earliest of his productions (though preceded by sixty-two other comedies) that have remained in Chaplin's control. If such reissues are his aim in the numerous law-suits engaged against unauthorised copies and screenings, more power to Chaplin's campaign in the courts. The only possible response to this latest boon is: "more boons, please, Charlie."

JAY LEYDA

THE FUGITIVE KIND

THERE ARE, OBSERVES the Orphic hero of *The Fugitive Kind* (United Artists), two kinds of people in this world: "the buyers and the ones who get bought"; adding, as a meaningful afterthought, "and the kind that don't belong no place at all." It is the members of this last section who are styled the fugitive kind.

In Tennessee Williams' screen adaptation of his play *Orpheus Descending*, this kind have generally suffered injury in a brush with the ugly values of the world, causing them to retreat into their own quasi-poetic fantasy lives. Val Xavier, an itinerant guitar player, identifies himself with a small bird he once saw, lighter than air, which sleeps on the wind and descends to earth only at the moment of its death. When Val, in a vain effort at giving society another trial, exchanges his individual snakeskin jacket for respectable serge and comes to work in a general store, he slowly discovers that its proprietress, Lady, is another refugee from the contemporary scene. Her obsessive image is her father's wine-garden, long ago wantonly destroyed by fire. In the wine-garden grew a fig-tree, barren until the glorious day when it yielded a single fig. That fig and she are one and the same, she claims in a burst of recognition. The wine-garden is reconstructed behind the store after Lady learns that her own husband, dying of cancer upstairs, was the prime instigator of the fire which killed her father. Her revenge will be to inaugurate the new garden while he is still alive. But both she and Val are destined to perish in the conflagration brought about once more by her vengeful husband.

There is a third main character, a fugitive from a rich local family



"A Dog's Life", from "The Chaplin Revue".



"Sons and Lovers": Trevor Howard and Dean Stockwell.

and its barren values: a wild girl, who hurtles through the countryside in a mud-spattered car bent on proving to all and sundry "just how lewd a lewd vagrant can be". She recognises in Val one of her own kind, and does her utmost to prevent his embroilment in the social order she has rejected.

I realise very well that this kind of resumé can be harmful to a genuinely poetic work, but in this instance I cannot help feeling that it is justified. Only rarely is the surface plot line submerged (and thus transformed) into potent atmosphere or evocative and meaningful behaviour. Too often, the texture seems precious and thin. Sidney Lumet, the director, employs a deliberately artificial presentation: dense rain is shot through by milky arc lights; in the long, soul-searching scenes between Val and Lady, pools of theatrical light well up and fade. (The striking camerawork, incidentally, is by Boris Kaufman.) The task of evoking poesy from the prosaic, of rendering the shabby forlorn, is painstakingly undertaken; but the sum total is bricks without straw.

The script is largely to blame. The implication that representatives of the fugitive kind have an instinctive understanding of each other's enigmatic utterances soon becomes small comfort to the unfugitive spectator, who has not. This applies particularly when the pace of the playing is so slow and measured as to imply hidden significance even where it is clear that none could lurk. Need, for instance, the down-trodden little sheriff's wife who has found relief and self-expression in her painting listen with such an air of stupefaction when Val suggests that this gave a meaning to her existence? And then go on to echo his words in the tones of one who fears they might break.

There remain the performances in the central roles. Anna Magnani (who plays Lady) is an actress instinct with *saute qui peut*. One senses the astute professional's awareness that the ship is far from unsinkable; and she makes her effects as often as she can without ever conveying a complete identity with the setting. Joanne Woodward achieves the right note of frenzied rebellion, just poised above reckless self-destruction; whilst Marlon Brando performs an incalculable service to the film. During his opening interrogation before the local Judge, the camera stays on him for extremely long takes, and one sees his unique mastery of applied naturalism at its best. This is an archetypal example of the kind of acting which has

become, in the hands of less talented American players, so hackneyed and debased. With Brando, the lines are broken up into unpredictable fragments yet always seem uncannily justified, while the eyes never lose their reflection of an unbroken inner current of thought and feeling. Not even Brando, though, can sustain potency in what often seems a self-parodying excursion into Tennessee Williams' corrupt and crumbling Deep South.

DEREK PROUSE

SONS AND LOVERS

"FROM THE FRANK and passionate pages of D. H. Lawrence's masterpiece" comes this Anglo-American film version of *Sons and Lovers* (Fox) directed by Jack Cardiff. To its Hollywood backers, it seems, Lawrence's book represents a high class story of seduction and romance, drawing—by its title and its suggestions of promiscuity—not only the reading public but also an audience that would otherwise never take the trouble to read the novel.

The novel was in its day admired for a power and a realism of social detail which Lawrence's generation was unused to seeing in English writing. Now, less striking in some ways, it still has insight, great lyricism, and a sense of character which makes most of the people solid literary creations. But what is the excuse for taking a novel such as this as the basis for a film lasting one hour and forty minutes? Is it merely to provide the starting point for a "love, sex, and hate" melodrama?

Certainly, in this version, the script has scrupulously avoided any charge of sensationalism. Paul Morel's amorous adventures are conducted with decorous primness, and his dilemma cannot be said to arise out of an over-passionate nature. In fact, there are few clues in the screenplay as to where the conflict is meant to lie. The decision—which should be an agonising decision—whether to work in a garment factory or take a unique opportunity of studying art in London, is slurred over casually. The tension between Paul, in love with the daughter of a Calvinistic farmer's wife, and his mother, possessive, ambitious, snobbish, never comes to a head in any scene of crucial intensity. The contrast between the simple, inhibited Miriam (Heather Sears) and the easy, "emancipated" Clara (Mary Ure) is never more than a literary one—and his relationships with the two women provide episodes, but no drama.

All that is left of Lawrence's book is a story about a talented young man, who stays at home rather than leave his mother to the mercies of her hard-drinking proletarian husband, and then is mercifully released by her death to follow his star in the world of art. This, expressed through a script that wanders from scene to scene and theme to theme like a mad butterfly collector, is scarcely enough.

For this, the main responsibility must rest with the script—an uneasy mixture of literary dialogue and dry allusive understatement: apparently the outcome of combining talents as unsuited to each other as Gavin Lambert's and T. E. B. Clarke's. But to some extent the director must also take responsibility. Jack Cardiff has given great care and attention to photography of a very high standard, and the best scenes in the film are those which catch the strange combination of town and country which makes up the midland industrial landscape. But the excellence of some of the views does not make up for a general slackness of tempo and lack of dramatic movement. For the most part the performances are disappointing. Only Trevor Howard makes his part come alive. At least, whenever he is on the screen, something is happening. Wendy Hiller, in an unsympathetic and wan role, has little to portray except unhappiness and petulance; her best moments are the scenes of cautious pride over her son's talents. As Paul Morel, Dean Stockwell is pleasant, unassuming, and makes virtually no impression at all.

It is hard to see who will be pleased by this film. The Lawrence addicts cannot be satisfied with a skimpy and superficial rendering of the novel. Sensation hunters will feel themselves let down by the tentative and furtive love scenes. Film connoisseurs will find nothing very distinguished in the direction or overall production. Seekers of a good story or even of a good cry will come away unmoved and dry-eyed. It is a particularly tantalising failure because in one scene, when the village is stirred into anthill-like frenzy by a mine disaster, the camera conveys something of the special quality of Lawrence's novel—the feeling for a tight community vividly understood and captured. But the scene is short, and the promise of a more imaginative approach to the film remains unfulfilled.

KENNETH CAVANDER



"The Trials of Oscar Wilde": Peter Finch and John Fraser.

THE TWO OSCAR WILDES

WARWICK's *The Trials of Oscar Wilde* went into production on March 24th, boasting Technicolor, Technirama and, according to the producer Harold Huth's later testimony in court, a budget of £269,000. Four days later Vantage Films began *Oscar Wilde*, a monochrome film with an unspecified but clearly much smaller budget and a shorter schedule. The key figure in this unusual competition seems to have been the American Jo Eisinger, who was associated with the Warwick project in its early days but finally emerged as executive producer and scriptwriter of the Vantage film.

Rival publicity during production consisted mainly of sneers, accusations and shocked indignation at each other's lack of ethics. The main protagonists were Mr. Huth, who underlined Vantage's lower budget and suggested that they had an inferior cast, and Gregory Ratoff, director of the Vantage production, who remarked that the cost of a film was no guarantee of results and that his cast in any case was a director's dream. After Warwick had thrown an elaborate press reception at the Café Royal, Vantage deplored their use of green carnations (and green drinks and cigarettes) as a vulgar publicity gimmick—and countered by inviting the press to visit the set at Walton Studios. At one point Mr. Ratoff, underlining the virtues of Robert Morley as Wilde, hastened to add that he was not among those who considered that an Australian cowboy could not cope with the role.

Both films seemed set for a première on the same day. But after Vantage brought back its première date to May 22nd, Warwick alleged an infringement of copyright and sought an interim injunction until the dispute had been decided. During the High Court case which followed, it transpired that Warwick had paid £375 for the rights to the two books concerned shortly before taking action. Mr. Justice Danckwerts, refusing to grant an injunction, observed that there was not much to choose in what was a matter of cut-throat competition.

Critics received an invitation from Vantage to view the working copy of *Oscar Wilde*, since the first print would not be ready before the première; then came a telegram announcing that the working copy wouldn't be ready either; and finally an invitation was issued to a Thursday press show, an innovation which caused some grumbling among critics accustomed to a three-day film-going week. Vantage, with the benefit of Fox distribution, could finally claim an earlier press show and première; Warwick, whose picture is distributed by Eros, were mysteriously robbed of a West End run but got their film on to circuit release a full fortnight ahead of their rivals. The *Daily Cinema* solemnly observed that there was a moral

to be learnt from the exceptional speed with which the two films had been produced: "You don't know what you can achieve until you try."

Oscar Wilde is the most obviously hasty production. Eisinger's script, the ruthlessly limited number of camera set-ups, the attempts in editing to force unmatchable shots together, all display a decided shoddiness; and the choice of Gregory Ratoff as director hardly seems to have been a matter of cool reflection. Apart from the actual trials, events are manipulated with a startling disregard not merely for the facts but for the truth within the situations; and the crudeness of most of these inventions indicates a general absence of sympathy with or even interest in the real tragedy of Wilde's final years. Of the performances, only Ralph Richardson as Sir Edward Carson seems more than adequate; and most of the rest, including Robert Morley's piping, desperately amiable attempt at Wilde, are decidedly less.

Ken Hughes's script for *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*, on the other hand, has been motivated by something more than an anxiety to exploit a hitherto forbidden story. Although several scenes again depart from the facts, the dramatisation, even when it skids into near-melodrama, is concerned not to sensationalise but to expose the degree of persecution which Wilde was compelled to suffer. And here the film so succeeds in genuinely moving its audience that the contemporary relevance, particularly of its suggestion that Wilde's perversion was a matter for medicine rather than the law, becomes evident.

The Trials of Oscar Wilde has the advantage of a brilliantly effective central trio of performances, locked together with an exactness hinting at a greater sensitivity in Ken Hughes's direction than his past films (*Joe Macbeth*, *The Long Haul*, *Jazzboat*) have indicated. Peter Finch as Wilde, John Fraser as Douglas and Lionel Jeffries as Queensberry show not only an intense, individual feeling for their own roles, but a striking awareness of the relationships between the three. *The Trials* has its share of inflated sequences, and more than its share of exhibitionism in secondary parts. But the understanding and fundamental rightness of its treatment of what—as its rival makes plain—might have been only sensationalism is rare enough to deserve an enthusiastic welcome.

DEREK HILL

In Brief

MURDER BY CONTRACT (Columbia). Several years ago, before Hollywood dedicated itself to multi-million dollar spectacles, a number of off-beat, small budget pictures sneaked through the machine, were noticed by specialised film magazines and a few reputations were made. Now, with talk of an American new wave, we may expect a return to this type of production among the little independent groups in New York and elsewhere. Irving Lerner has belonged to this group for many years now: an experienced documentary film-maker, he co-produced *Muscle Beach* with Joseph Strick, made a tough second feature, *Man Crazy*, which was banned in England, and worked as associate and editor on a number of larger commercial films. In 1958 he made two second features for Orbit Productions (a company headed by Milton Sperling and Philip Yordan) called *City of Fear* and *Murder by Contract*. If there is a new movement in the American cinema, Lerner's career might well be taken as an example of what can be achieved with limited means within both the commercial and non-theatrical fields.

Murder by Contract (the more personal of the two Orbit films) takes a B-picture outline and adds an undercurrent of ideas: some are half-stated, some are banal, some are defiantly radical. There is nothing comforting or sentimental in this story of a young man named Claude who becomes a professional killer in order to buy himself a comfortable house. For him, there is no real moral problem: his is a business like any other and professional pride can be made to take precedence over conscience. Ben Simcoe's otherwise compact and colloquial script hints at the implications behind this premise without really defining them; and certain key questions, such as the reason for the killer's fear (or frustrated desire?) of women, are left unanswered. Yet despite this lack of analysis, Lerner's elliptical method communicates a good deal. Claude's coldly objective attitude to his job is aptly summed up in the sequence where he lazes around Los Angeles with his two sinister contact men before finally settling down for the kill: later his meeting with a call girl (beautifully played by Cathy Browne) hints at areas of corruption which are never seen. Given such a cold-

blooded and violent theme, the film's tone is remarkably un-violent. Instead, Perry Botkin's guitar score is used to make a macabre, almost disembodied comment on the action.

No service would be done to its makers by overrating this film—in the final analysis, it is still a B-picture, made on a visibly small budget and variably played and executed. And yet it could be studied with advantage by more prosperous groups on both sides of the Atlantic. It scarcely wastes a second of its eighty minutes running time; it was shot in about eight days; and it makes intelligent use of an actor, Vince Edwards, who was previously wasted in stereotyped tough-guy roles. There must be a lesson here somewhere.—JOHN GILLET

HELLER IN PINK TIGHTS (Paramount). Perhaps the casting of Sophia Loren as an actress struck them as presumptuous; or the nerve of Italians Carlo Ponti and Marcello Girosi, daring to produce a Western. Whatever the reason, *Heller in Pink Tights* got much the same cold shoulder from the critics, here and in America, as *The Black Orchid* and *That Kind of Woman*. Again, uncommon virtues of handling and vividness of background seem to have been disregarded, and Loren, blonde-wigged and dextrous as a hellion entertainer of the Old West, made the scapegoat for an agreeable script by Dudley Nichols and Walter Bernstein which nevertheless lacks staying power. The basic idea, to suggest the challenge and danger besetting a bankrupt theatrical troupe on the run from creditors and Indians, is a promising one, and George Cukor's old passion for dyes and greasepaint serves it well. The best things include hilarious glimpses of *La Belle Hélène* and *Mazeppa*, the latter ending with Loren's boy-hero, nude in flesh tights, strapped to the back of a horse and sent clattering round the stalls; Margaret O'Brien as an adenoidal, none too innocent *ingénue*, chafing under the selfishly protective restraints of her flirtatious mother (Eileen Heckart); the convincing period reconstruction, both of muddy-tracked cattle towns and theatre interiors; and some dynamic backstage groupings involving Loren, her leading man (Anthony Quinn) and a laughing, Palance-hearted gunslinger (Steve Forrest), offset by the film's striking awareness of colour composition. The rest, Loren gambling and staking herself against four jacks, her Italian temperament, part shrewdness, part folly, guiding her through everything except the card game unscathed, sounds and is lacking in innovation. But it still manages, now and then, to impress.



Although the largely expendable trek from Cheyenne to Bonanza, all nervously shot exteriors, snowstorms and hooliganism in mountain streams, pares the plot down irremediably to a girl and two men (of whom Quinn, miscast, looks the more miserable), it still offers a last outstanding sequence. A sinister band of renegade Apaches come upon the troupe's abandoned belongings, deck themselves in finery and fire the wagons. In that breathtaking whirl of crowns, masks, costumes and colour, a distinct Kurosawa flavour blends with traces of Ford to provide the sort of spontaneous magic critics presumably miss when they walk out on erratic, out-of-the-rut films like this.—PETER JOHN DYER

INHERIT THE WIND (United Artists). It was clearly only a matter of time before some enterprising producer turned his attention to Tennessee's famous "Monkey Trial" of 1925, when Clarence Darrow defended a schoolteacher accused of teaching Darwinism against the hell-fire attack of the noted attorney and presidential candidate, William Jennings Bryan. Its theatrical potentialities were clearly demonstrated in the play written around the trial by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. And, apart from historical interest, it was easy to draw a contemporary parallel, with the latent forces of McCarthyism standing in for the bigoted fundamentalists of thirty-five years ago.

Stanley Kramer's *Inherit the Wind* takes full advantage of all these conflicts and adds some of its own. Its best scenes conjure up an atmosphere of passionate polemics, of stubborn convictions and old-fashioned loyalties. At its worst, it reveals Kramer's main limitations as a director: a weakness for caricature and a certain banality in the handling of emotional relationships. But this is not a stylist's film. Rather, it provides a field-day for two of Hollywood's great veterans—Spencer Tracy (as the film's Darrow) and Fredric March (Bryan). Dominating the central court-room scenes, they provide the film with its real excitement—a battle between two elderly giants who, at their most intense, look strangely like their Mr. Hydes of many years ago.

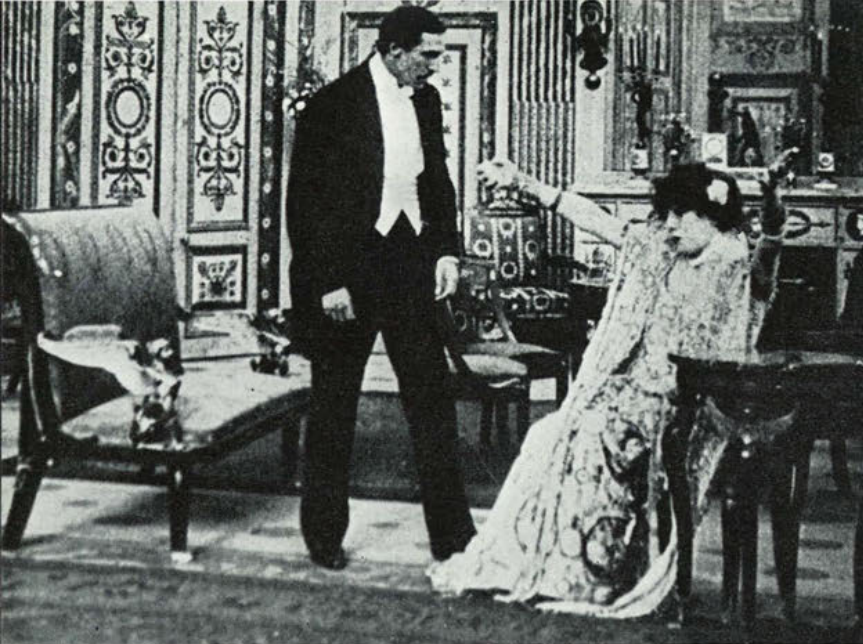
If Tracy can be said to win on points, this may be due to the fact that March has been slightly over-directed. This kind of flamboyancy can be made to work on the stage, but a close-up view inevitably emphasises the essential theatricality of the writing; and Kramer's own handling has its inflationary aspects. Yet the fascination remains. Both actors have marvellous timing, they weave and attack like experienced boxers, and even their mannerisms (which are all on display here) are made to play their full part. Curiously, perhaps, the power of these two performances contributes a little to the feeling that the exploitable nature of the material attracted Kramer at least as much as its undertones of contemporary meaning. Sympathies are more or less equitably distributed; and although there is plenty of excitement and passion in it, the film's very enclosure somehow makes it difficult to reach out into life itself.

JOHN GILLET

THE DAY THEY ROBBED THE BANK OF ENGLAND (M-G-M). The Bank of England was designed by a human brain, expounds Hugh Griffith, the hoary leader of a group of Irish Nationalists, and its defences must therefore be less than perfect. The finding of a flaw in the Bank's defences by these turn of the century adventurers was the theme of John Brophy's novel; and it provides an ingenious and lively scheme which writer Howard Clewes and director John Guillermin have fashioned into a tense and amusing little thriller. Aldo Ray, as the Irish-American mining engineer who organises the raid, is a rather over-stolid figure. But Peter O'Toole plays brilliantly as the vacuous guard Captain Fitch, whose sad ambition is to try thinking—once—just to prove to himself that he remains a soldier by choice and not necessity. Guillermin builds some real tension into his climax—the duel between the frenzied tunnellers and the hard-pressed Fitch, struggling manfully to put two and two together—before arriving at a denouement which is largely, and wisely, thrown away.

Albert Sharpe as a glorious ruin called Tosher, ecstatically returning to his beloved sewers; Miles Malleon as the finicky curator of the Soane Museum; and the bumbling and incredibly ancient assistant in the sewage planning office, are comic characters that embellish, without obtruding on, the briskly told story. *The Day They Robbed the Bank of England* is cheerful, unpretentious and concise: rare enough virtues in the contemporary cinema to deserve acknowledgment.—SAM KULA

Irving Lerner's "Murder by Contract".



The Players' Witness

Notes on some early acting performances preserved in the National Film Archive

by DAVID ROBINSON



This article, whose publication coincides with the National Film Archive's twenty-fifth anniversary, is the first of an occasional series on some of the less widely written about among the films preserved in the Archive.

PAST GINGER'S FARM on the left, and The Partridge Arms and the Baptist Chapel on the right . . . The calm Buckinghamshire village of Aston Clinton is rather an unexpected place to find the treasure of sixty-five years of cinema—Garbo, Chaplin, Eisenstein, Renoir, Gish, Clara Bow and Betty Grable, Groucho, Stroheim and Jayne Mansfield. But there it is. For twenty-five years now the Archive (along with forty-odd sister-archives in other parts of the world) has been grasping every piece of film that comes its way, of any possible interest to posterity.

Between them the archives have not done badly: not many artists or periods of film history have not left some relic, however fragmentary. And only now, as time rushes on, can we begin to appreciate the cinema's special marvel of permanence. Just suppose that we could command and see again any piece of theatre history since 1895: conjure up Craig's *Dido* or his Moscow *Hamlet*, or Salvini's *Othello*, or Reinhardt's *Oedipus*. With the film you can do exactly that.

It is only possible to show publicly a fraction of the Archive's total collection. The rest remains attainable to the student; but the mass is so great, and the ways are often poorly charted. About 36,000 reels of film: the wonder is rather that all this is collected, preserved, stored at all, than that the recording and cataloguing (an elaborate, costly, time-consuming business) is behind the times.

One marvel produced by the cinema is that, after thousands of years, acting is no longer a fugitive art. The idea of the notes that follow was to try to trace some pattern among the acting performances preserved on film at Aston Clinton. The task proved bewildering. There are so many gaps; so many surprises. No film of Mrs. Pat Campbell or Ellen Terry; no Pola Negri; no Moskvina. But then, looking for something else, one discovers in an unrewarding role in a minor film an unrecorded, rich performance by, say, Michael Chekhov. What follows, therefore, can only claim to be the roughest outline guide to some of the known material in the Archive's collection.

2

Seen as a dramatic medium, the cinema arrived suitably, in 1895, as the culmination of a century or more's inexorable development towards realism. It began, perhaps, with Garrick, whose observation of Nature astonished an age accustomed to a formalised art of chant and posturing. "His distinguished excellencies", according to Johnson, were his "True conception of character and natural expression of it."

As far as the realistic movement was concerned, the ascendancy of the Kemble family during the three decades which followed Garrick's retirement must have been a retrogression. The next step forward, however, was decisive: the advent in the early years of the century of the Romantic actor, idealised in Edmund Kean. Pre-eminent though he was, Kean was only part of an international phenomenon. Every theatre of the 1820's and 30's had its own Kean—demoniac, inspired, thrilling their audiences, generally tearing their own bodies to early graves. Russia produced Mochalov; Italy, Modena; Germany, Ludwig Devrient. In France, Talma was followed by Rachel and Lemaître. The move towards 'nature' was implicit in their insistence on 'inspiration'. "Spiritual profundity and a flaming imagination are two qualities which form the main components of talent," wrote Mochalov; and Rachel, on her death-bed, announced: "In studying for the stage, take my word for it, declamation and gesture are of little avail. You have to think and weep."

Above: Sarah Bernhardt's "La Dame aux Camélias."
Left: Nazimova's "Camille", with Valentino as Armand.

The romantic blaze seems to have been succeeded, practically everywhere, by a guttering out of inferior actors. They too made their contribution towards theatrical realism. Driven to produce effects by means other than their performance, the new actors took an increasing interest in production values—which for them meant historical accuracy and laborious concentration on realistic detail.

In England the apogee was Charles Kean's great archaeological stagings of Shakespeare at the Princess's in the Forties and Fifties. Dull, overblown pedantic pageants as these must have been, their influence was far-reaching. It was the Kean productions that inspired the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's experiments and reforms, his "consistent effort to add to the plastic possibilities of stage setting . . . and . . . the characteristic thoroughness with which the Duke integrated every detail of a performance into the ensemble" (Lee Simonson). And it was the Meiningers who in turn inspired Antoine and the Théâtre Libre, Otto Brahm and the Freie Bühne, Stanislavski and Nemirovitch-Danchenko and the Moscow Art Theatre.

As the end of the nineteenth century approached, realism in the theatre was irresistible. Realistic production meant realistic playing; realistic playing cleared the way for realistic and naturalistic writing. Scribe and Dumas *filis* did very well for the theatres and actors of the mid-century. Now the theatre was making ready for Robertson, Ibsen, Shaw, Zola, Strindberg, Chekhov, Gorki. And the cinema. The cinema, inevitably destructive of the old, mannered histrionic styles, arrived in time to catch and ridicule the tail-end of a pre-eighteenth century tradition; to adapt to itself the realistic drift; and to complete the development of a unified, 'international' dramatic realism.

3

The move towards realism was not so natural or easy as it may now seem to have been. The grand histrionic tradition kept (and possibly still keeps) its adherents and supporters. In a way, one can see their point. The critic of the *Athenaeum*, for instance, writing of Forbes-Robertson's *Macbeth* (1898) complained:

Pleased as we are, we have ceased to be thrilled. To the pursuit of the beautiful, we are sacrificing the terrible and the grotesque . . . His performance is beautiful and noble. Are we unreasonable that we want to be appalled?

Sarah Bernhardt, in her writings at least, paid lip-service to the realists. One suspects that her magic was really that she belonged with the dazzlers, the thrillers, the appallers. She has left extensive records of her performances (several gramophone records and at least eight films); one prays that they do not represent an adequate memory of the Divine Sarah. The Archive has the Film d'Art records of *Elisabeth, Reine d'Angleterre* and *La Dame aux Camélias*, both made in 1912, when the former had just been added to her repertoire and she had been playing the latter for some thirty years.

She was sixty-eight and getting stout. The leg which was to be amputated three years later was evidently already giving her trouble. For all that, her mode of performance is to flirt distractedly around, with wild, pointless, bird-like movements of hands and head, and chattering incessantly most of the time. When she reaches high-points of pathos and drama, she flings her body and her arms about in gross abandon. Even as Marguerite, supposedly fluttering to her tubercular end, Madame remains formidable.

She appears hardly to distinguish Elisabeth from Marguerite, or Marguerite from Sarah Bernhardt. (It is notable that *La Dame aux Camélias* is dressed and set in the fashion of 1912—a disdain for historical accuracy only paralleled in pre-nineteenth century theatre.) Yet Bernhardt cannot for nothing have commanded the notoriously demanding French audience for sixty years. I don't think that her qualities were those of painstaking realism claimed for her by May Agate in her idolatrous little book *Madame Sarah* (in which, after describing Marguerite's elaborate death scene, she comments "What

impressed our doctor was the perfect timing"). Evidently Bernhardt had some hypnotic magic all her own:

She is (wrote Shaw) entirely inhuman and incredible. But the incredibility is pardonable, because, although it is all the greatest nonsense, nobody believing in it, the actress herself least of all, it is so artful, so clever, so well recognised a part of the business, and carried off with such a genial air, that it is impossible not to accept it with good humour.

Whatever the magic may have been, it eludes the film; and that is sad.

Bernhardt substituted herself for the leading character. Duse, on the other hand, must have approached her art like Nazimova, who wrote: "I am nothing. I am nobody. I have to reconstruct my whole self into the woman I am to portray."

It may be that Bernhardt's failure in the films of 1912 was because she mistakenly worked too hard to adapt her performance to the cinema, feeling impelled to speed and concentrate the action to approximate to the frenzied acting style of the conventional story films of the period. In making any comparison, it is only fair to recall that although Duse was filmed in *Cenere* barely four years later, they were fairly momentous years for the cinema. Between 1912 and 1916, the world had seen the débuts of Chaplin, as well as *The Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance* and *Gish*.

Duse brought all her intelligence to the problems of the new art:

If I were twenty or thirty years younger, I would start afresh in this field with the certainty of accomplishing much. But I should have to learn from the bottom up, forgetting the theatre entirely, and concentrating on the special medium of this new art. My mistake, and that of many others, lay in employing 'theatrical' techniques despite every effort to avoid them. Here is something quite, quite fresh, a penetrating form of visual poetry, an untried experiment of the human soul. Alas, I am too old for it.

She regarded the cinema, we are told, more as music than as a narrative technique. Her intelligence and artistry make *Cenere*—misunderstood and coldly received on its first appearance—today one of the most enduring and 'modern' of silent films. "My film is only a sketch, it is true: but I think we have tried something different."

For a start, Duse had the sense, working in a mute medium, to act mutely, without talking or seeming to talk. The performance is wholly determined from within; but the outward form goes beyond ordinary realistic expression to become mimetic, almost balletic. The simple story, about a son who returns home to his old, poor mother who, for the sake of his career

"Her movements are all simple, expressive, essential . . ." Duse in "*Cenere*", directed by Febo Mari and Arturo Ambrosio.



and his fiancée, gives him up, is mostly told by the titles. Duse hardly *does* anything. What matters is what she *expresses*; and she seems able to express everything. "At the mercy of poverty and age": she simply sits by her cottage door, listlessly twisting a worn stocking about her hands, then tosses it aside. Into the action she compresses years of tedious privation.

Her movements are all simple, expressive, essential. When she pulls a cloak over her head, she seems to be hiding herself and all her fears and shame. The climactic scene of the film is practically stripped of action: she walks away from her cottage, leans against a tree, sets down the bags she is carrying, takes her son's reliquary in her hands and kisses it, seems to cry. Then she simply takes up her bags again and pulls the cloak over her shoulders. And with this simple sequence of ordinary actions she expresses the mother's whole tragedy.

Above all, Duse's performance imposes an extraordinarily marked rhythm upon the film. One only appreciates how strong it is when, succumbing to a moment of extreme grief, the mother breaks out of the rhythm that has been created, to lean against a wall and beat upon it with her fist, three times. At the third blow she relaxes again, and the rhythm is resumed; but the shock of the break is remarkable.

Duse's mistakes are not so damaging as she may have supposed. She could well have been one of the great creators of the cinema.

4

The most fruitful of the realistic theatres, and one of the oldest, was the Russian. Stanislavski railed against the out-moded conventions and mannerisms that he found in the acting of nineteenth century Russia; but some of the great advocates of realism had preceded him. After Mochalov came the ex-serf Schepkin; after Schepkin, Ostrovsky and the actors A. P. Lensky and Maria Yermolova—neither of whom, unhappily, has left us any film record.

Not surprisingly, perhaps, our own archive is least helpful in discovering the Russian actors. There is plenty of evidence, of course, of the way in which the Soviet film directors carried over Stanislavski's principles into the cinema. But of the great Art Theatre players, Kachalov is represented neither by his solitary feature film, Protozanov's *The White Eagle* (1928; Meyerhold also appeared in the film) nor by the splendid film records of Art Theatre productions in which he appeared. Nor is Moskvina represented, although there is in the country a terribly worn 16mm. version of *Polikushka*.

The emigrés are there, of course: some like Lissenko and Mosjukine, who enjoyed a brief stardom outside the country where they had first made their name as film actors. Others, (from the theatre) Ouspenskaia, Michael Chekhov, Boleslawski (Polish by birth), Olga Baclanova—turn up in supporting roles in American films of the Thirties, often providing notable

pillars of solidity in flimsy Hollywood structures.

One of the most frustrating gaps in the Archive's collection is a Russian actress—Alla Nazimova. Nazimova's history in Russia is a little hazy. Born in 1879, she is sometimes claimed as an Art Theatre player; but there seems no good evidence for this. Pretty certainly she studied with Nemirovitch-Danchenko at the Philharmonic Society; and there is no doubt that she absorbed the principles on which his later teaching was based. By 1905 she was established in America, where she spent the rest of her career, apart from tours abroad. Between 1918 and 1923 she enjoyed a meteoric Hollywood career. Then she returned to the theatre. A great interpreter of Chekhov, she was evidently a brilliant, exotic, vital artist: "a tigress in the leash of art". Unhappily we have no evidence of her great days, of *A Doll's House*, *Salome*, or *Camille* (in which Valentino played Armand). All that we have at Aston Clinton are two films in which she played supporting roles, not long before her death in 1945—*Escape* (1945) and *In Our Time* (1944).

In the latter film she plays a fairly conventional grande dame, but charged with extraordinary vitality. In *Escape*, however, one glimpses something of what she must have been—a Garbo, fired with inspiration. The film is a piece of post-*Casablanca* kitsch, directed by Mervyn LeRoy, about the rescue of a Jewish prisoner from a concentration camp. Nazimova makes of the prisoner—an old actress—something rich and extraordinary: a wretched, tormented woman, illuminated with the remembrances of her own brilliance and success and charm. It makes one long to see this particular lacuna in the Archive's collection filled.

5

Naturally enough the theatrical tradition most strongly represented is our own. Practically every important actor of the past seventy years can be glimpsed in one way or another: Ainley, Benson, the Bancrofts, Forbes-Robertson, Martin-Harvey, Tree and so on. Irving died too soon to leave a film record (though there are always rumours that a film exists, usually 'in America'). Unfortunately we do not possess a copy of Ellen Terry's single film, *Her Greatest Performance* (1916), nor any of the several films in which Mrs. Patrick Campbell appeared in later years.

One film, *Masks and Faces* (1917), made to raise money for R.A.D.A., brings together practically all the leading theatrical personalities of the day—including veterans like Sir John Hare, youngsters like Gladys Cooper and Lillah McCarthy, and the dramatists Shaw and Barrie. Such a parade is fascinating, of course, but it gives little opportunity to judge acting styles.

When, however, we get actors on their own ground, as it were, we are aware of how wide was the gulf between the 'traditional' and realist schools at the turn of the century. Hepworth's intelligent record of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* (1913) shows exactly why the critic of *The Athenaeum* was so disappointed in that actor. It is practically a 'modern' performance, relaxed, restrained, controlled by inward intelligence as well as feeling. It would be, by any standards, a remarkable performance for a man past sixty. Forbes-Robertson's face is lined and his figure gaunt; but we have seen few Hamlets more youthful or lithe.

Forbes-Robertson's interpretation of Hamlet dated from 1897; *Trilby* was first performed in 1895, but in the film version (1914) it might almost belong to a different century. One barely notices the setting or the supporting players. Beerbohm Tree is an extravagant, over-size, one man show.



Most of the leading stage figures of the time appeared in "Masks and Faces", which was made in 1917 to raise money for R.A.D.A. In this group are—from right to left—Gladys Cooper, Irene Vanbrugh, Dion Bouicault, Lillah McCarthy; and (on left of table) Dennis Neilson-Terry and Ben Webster.

Monstrously bearded, flaunting, eye-rolling, posing, calculatedly demonic, carrying on without any regard for reality or indeed for very much else. Shaw's description must have been very just: "Tree . . . was always craving from authors . . . a perfect projection of the Tree personality. What did he care for Higgins or Hamlet? His real objective was his amazing self."

But, allowing for Tree's extreme extravagance, his non-realistic manner still seems to have been nearer the norm of the more popular theatre at the turn of the century than Forbes-Robertson. Even Benson, who worked on into the Thirties, and always enjoyed a reputation for restraint, looks pretty hammy. One must not forget the extent to which Benson was respected in England for the athleticism of his Shakespearean productions. As Hesketh Pearson has written: "Everyone felt that Shakespeare was safe in the hands of one who could play cricket, tennis, football and hockey so well . . ."

Matheson Lang, even as late as 1923, is a broad, posturing *Wandering Jew* in Maurice Elvey's version, expressing himself in superficial, histrionic mechanics. Martin-Harvey, to judge from a fragment of *The Only Way* (1926: first performed on the stage, 1890) with a somewhat quieter style, could still hardly be called a realist.

But the trend towards realism was irresistible. By the time of the talkies, the old actors must largely have disappeared from the stage as well as the screen. The acting in such a film as *How He Lied to Her Husband* (1931, with Edmund Gwenn, Robert Harris and Vera Lennox) shows the survival of a declamatory quality which now sounds a little strange; overall the acting belongs recognisably to the modern theatre, rather than with the old actor-managers.

6

These, then represent some of the existing acting traditions upon which the cinema was able to call during its formative years. Inevitably the film hastened the demise of anti-realist elements, at least in the popular theatre (Meyerhold, Piscator and Brecht are another story). Actors in the school of Bernhard or Tree could not hold out long under the cold glare of the cine-camera.

The final stage, it seems to me, has been the international movement in this century towards an approximation of acting styles. Even ignoring questions of costume and setting, it is not difficult to identify the nationality of a film of fifty years ago, simply through the acting style. A hundred years before that, one may guess, before theatrical interchange became common, national schools of acting were even more distinctive. Today, however, (language and national characteristics apart) it is hard to categorise with confidence a distinctive German or French or Swedish or Japanese style of playing. National idiosyncracies may survive; basic techniques become more and more identified.

It is not simply that acting performances, through the cinema, have become international property. Acting itself has become a much more international art. It is true that 19th and early 20th century actors often toured extensively: Salvini played with Edwin Booth; Booth played with Ellen Terry and so on. But never has the interchange been so complete as in the cinema.

It has, of course, been most marked in the American cinema. There is not space here to discuss the difficult and fascinating theme of American acting traditions; it is sufficient to note the extraordinary evolution of American acting from



"Hamlet": directed by Hepworth and played by Forbes-Robertson.

the quaint, homely manner of Jefferson's and Belasco's theatre, typified by the early Griffith and Pickford films (and developed, no doubt, during the years when the touring company dominated the American theatre) to the days when 'Method' is a new and self-conscious watchword for a standard of acting unselfconsciously assimilated over the years.

To a great extent acting in the American cinema has been enriched by the wholesale absorption of foreign actors. Some of the strongest streams in the American theatre, of course—the Drews and Booths and Barrymores—had been imported from England in the 19th century. Hollywood, in her richest days, drew talent from practically every country in the world—Japan, Russia, France, Sweden, Britain, Ireland.

Germany, in particular, contributed richly to the American theatre—most, of course, at the time of the exodus of the early Thirties. Brecht and Reinhardt themselves worked in Hollywood—not spectacularly, though their presence was felt. One finds actors like Albert Bassermann (he appears with Nazimova in *Escape*), who as a young man was in the Saxe-Meiningen Company, and for years worked with Otto Brahm at the Freie Bühne. And then, of course, there is the distinguished roll of Reinhardt's old collaborators: Lubitsch as well as those like Jannings, Wegener and Krauss, who continued to work in Germany.

And the evidence is all in the Archive. The hoard is so vast that a superficial glance at only a fraction of the material, such as is offered here, must be merely frustrating. At best one may hope that it will entice students to a deeper and more scholarly study of our national collection.

Book Reviews

SEEN ANY GOOD FILMS LATELY?, by William K. Zinsser. (Hammond, Hammond & Co., 16s.)

"AS A CRITIC I reviewed films seriously, and I have serious opinions on the work of the major artists in the field today. These opinions are on record, and I won't trouble you with them here." But William Zinsser's essentially flippant book hardly sets one thumbing through back numbers of the New York *Herald Tribune*, where his reviews appeared for three and a half years. Almost the only whiff of opinion which sneaks into *Seen Any Good Films Lately?* appears in the final chapter, and is alternately depressing ("fine British films like *Richard III* and *A Kid for Two Farthings*") and safe ("excellent directors . . . abroad . . . include David Lean, Laurence Olivier, Carol Reed, Federico Fellini, Vittorio de Sica, René Clair, Georges (sic) Clouzot and many other men whose work is creative and exciting. As a group they bring taste and vitality to the modern screen.")

If Mr. Zinsser's exposures of screen clichés were as funny as he imagines, it would be easy enough to overlook the glimpses of critical standards which he permits us. But only one of his parodies has any kind of edge—the new grey-flannelled hero of waning integrity who tells his wife: "It was an Okinawan girl. She told me an old Taoist maxim that impressed me deeply: 'If you don't fight for what you believe in, you'll live longer.'"

His description of the critic's routine trials is limited to this sort of thing, on the business of seeing films before lunch: "I don't suppose it's any hardship to watch Miss Bardot changing into her bikini, whatever the hour—it beats going down Wall Street—but it's not all gravy with these foreign actresses. It could be Anna Magnani in childbirth." The more absurd press handouts and publicity stunts come in for the same kind of off-hand treatment, and an account of a visit to Hollywood contains the only material of real interest. Even here the picture of toppling studio empires seems to emerge almost accidentally, Mr. Zinsser's real enthusiasm being reserved for the animals' cemetery. "I had no idea how a movie was made . . ." he remarks brightly before the trip.

Some remarks on the pressures exerted on critics by film companies who happen to be advertising in the same paper may open a few innocent eyes; and an occasional bright anecdote enlivens the pages. But William Zinsser's conviction that he fought the good fight during the tenancy of his column seems as misplaced, at least on the strength of this record of his experiences as a critic, as an earnest and intelligent introduction by Elia Kazan.

DEREK HILL

STEPS IN TIME, by Fred Astaire. Illustrated. (Heinemann, 21s.) INGRID BERGMAN, *An Intimate Portrait*. By Joseph Henry Steele. (W. H. Allen, 21s.)

ANY FILM ACTOR writing his autobiography is bound to be bedevilled by the public image of himself, by the reams already written about it, by the lunatic framework of the publicity world. In *Steps in Time* Fred Astaire says: "I'm sure there's a big misunderstanding anyway, about what sort of guy I am. I'm convinced the general idea is that I'm a suave Joe who just dances from here to there . . . Well, the answer is that I'm not that way at all. I'm really bad-tempered, impatient, hard to please, critical . . . The carefree, the best-dressed, the debonair Astaire, what a myth! My hats are too small, my coats are too short, my walk is loose." And yet, in spite of this view of himself as something of a goon and a misfit, he can say that from the time he got married in 1933 till his wife's death twenty-one years later, he often woke in the morning saying to himself: "I must be the happiest fellow in the world." Pleasant words from an autobiographer.

This is a modest, likeable book; not as lively as you might expect,

and a bit indefinite in tone and scope, with a way of saying things you hope are jokes but aren't, from the general atmosphere, quite sure about; like: "Phyllis found an old English manor house with palm trees in front of it and bananas in the back yard." About the inside of his work—about techniques, aesthetics, efforts and problems—he has little to say. He clearly regards himself as a theatrical entertainer rather than as basically a film actor, mentioning: "The theatre and all of its offshoots: night clubs, radio, television, movies"—movies last, note.

Joseph Henry Steele's *Ingrid Bergman, An Intimate Portrait* is a pretty unlikeable biography, the in-me-she-confided type that makes you wonder how anyone could confide on paper in the sort of man who would publish personal letters; or, alternatively, whether the subject of the book approved the whole thing and if so what sort of a person *that* is. In fact, how the whole film publicity racket works (Mr. Steele was Miss Bergman's "personal representative" in her Hollywood days) in human terms; and how it is that "human interest", the most intimate sorrows and joys of people, has become one of the most valuable commodities of cheap journalism, something you can weigh in terms of money. And of course Ingrid Bergman is the ideal subject for such treatment because all the classic "human interest" situations have been hers: from being considered, through her appearance, presence, and some of her parts, almost a saint—indeed a priest once asked her to model for a statue in his church—she became the object of proportionately furious vilification; and the love affair that aroused it was again the classic one of north and south, Sweden and Italy, the emancipated Scandinavian-American woman (than whom . . .) and the jealous—professionally as well as sexually jealous—Latin man. Rossellini comes out of it dismally, Mr. Steele refusing to take him seriously and finding him not so much villainous as comic. Miss Bergman seems charming as ever, but remote; and likely to do inexplicable things like giving Joan of Arc's spare sackcloth robes (for burning at the stake) as Christmas presents to the studio secretaries. "I thought it would be a nice souvenir of the picture," she said, "and they can be used as bathrobes."

ISABEL QUIGLY

THE ARMCHAIR THEATRE. Illustrated. (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 21s.) THE GRAMMAR OF TELEVISION PRODUCTION, by Desmond Davis. Illustrated by Frank White and Michael Knight. (Barrie and Rockliff, 12s. 6d.)

NOTHING MORE GLOSSY THAN ABC Television's piece of elaborate public relations display has yet appeared among television literature in this country. *The Armchair Theatre* is beautifully produced, with an attractive layout and some excellent photographs, but the text itself reads like an ABC house magazine, with contributor after contributor describing the achievements of the *Armchair Theatre* series and the pleasures of working for it. This is legitimate enough if the book is intended mainly as a luxurious publicity handout; but in this case its claim to show "how to design, direct, act and enjoy television plays" is demonstrably a wild over-statement. It contains no real instructional matter; technicians write of their work only in the most general terms; there are too many articles by actors, with too little of value to say; and only one contributor (Iain MacCormick) has felt free to attack the limitations imposed on writers by commercial television. His is a controversial statement which deserves a better reply than it gets from his fellow writer, Ted Willis. It is unfortunate, too, that the play chosen for publication in full and analysis should be so amateurish a piece as Stuart Douglas' *The Shadow of the Ruthless*. This hardly seems the kind of work to be set up as a model for aspiring dramatists.

The Grammar of Television Production provides an interesting contrast. The late Desmond Davis has compiled a manual for television producers and directors whose sixty-four lucid pages contain more solid information on the difficulties, limitations and possibilities of the medium than half a dozen *Armchair Theatres*. It might seem at first that Mr. Davis's insistence on the immutability of rules must make for rigidity and even for unimaginative conformism. But the manual is intended as a guide for the producer engaged in the daily routine of television rather than for the genius who will always transcend the formulae. As such, and especially as a textbook for the beginner in a highly complicated craft, it appears to the lay eye as immensely useful. Moreover, although it is designed primarily for technicians, it should also be a help to anyone hoping to write for television, as well as an aid to an appreciation of production values for the ordinary interested viewer.

BRENDA DAVIES

MUSICAL MOODS FROM THE SILENT FILMS.
 Selected and played by Arthur Kleiner. Golden Crest
 Laboratory Series (New York) CR 4019. 12" L.P.

NOWADAYS WHEN WE HEAR, for instance, Joseph Carl Breil's score for *The Birth of a Nation*, it is all too easy to condemn its banality. Musical taste and musical appreciation have progressed at a different pace from the cinema, and few original silent film scores have survived as well as the pictures they accompanied. Still, the business of providing and performing music for silent films was quite a nice art. The composers and compilers could do a great deal more than simply provide a distraction from the scraping feet and rattling seats and sound of mastication.

Heard today, these accompaniments are as characteristic as Victorian theatre music. The sentimental *cantabiles* and the dramatic till-readies are deeply rooted in their period, richly evocative, conjuring images of sleek-haired Adonises and black-eyed women absorbed in the unique, sophisticated art of pantomime that was created and disappeared within the space of thirty years.

This delightful and fairly useless long-playing record assembles thirty themes from silent film accompaniments, selected and played by Arthur Kleiner, Musical Director of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Mr. Kleiner has included some examples of his own accompaniments—for *Battleship Potemkin* and *The Kid*, for instance—and shows how exactly he can re-create the feeling of original scores.

The rest of the material on the disc is of two sorts: first, the stock themes, such as "Agitato No. 3; for Gruesome or Infernal scenes, Witches" or "Misterioso No. 1; for Horror, Stealth, Conspiracy, Treachery". Composers are credited, though their names—I. Berge, G. Borch, J. S. Zamecnek and W. Wilowicz—today mean little. Secondly, there are the specially composed film scores; and one wishes that the collection included more of them. A moment from Saint-Saëns' sugary accompaniment for *L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise* (1908) compares curiously with Satie's sophisticated music for *Entr'acte* (1924). The more conventional commercial scores represented included Briel's for *Birth of a Nation*, the prolific Hugo Reisenfeld's music for *The Covered Wagon*, a nostalgic love theme ("I Have a Rendezvous with You") by E. Luz for *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and a rich Vamp theme from *A Fool There Was*.

The only slight mystery about the collection concerns the audience for which it was intended. Musically and academically its interest is, to say the least, limited. It might be anticipated that film society secretaries would carefully mosaic scraps on to tape to provide their own accompaniments for silent films, but I do not think the results would justify the labour. I suspect it is intended for private pleasures of nostalgia: the sleeve reproduces twenty stills from silent films and hints: "Every scene represents some definite mood. Additional enjoyment from this album may be had by matching the still with one of the 'Musical Themes from the Silent Films'."

DAVID ROBINSON

CAMPBELL DIXON

GEORGE CAMPBELL DIXON, who had been film critic of the *Daily Telegraph* since 1931, died on May 25th, aged sixty-four. Born in Tasmania, he worked as a correspondent for several Australian papers before coming to Britain in 1925. After about five years as literary editor of the *Daily Mail*, he joined the *Daily Telegraph* first as features editor, then as film critic. His own account of how this happened was given in a recent "Critical Self-Portrait" in *Films and Filming*: "as the only member of the staff interested in movies, I was told to fill the gap until a new critic could be found . . . at the end of three months the editor still hadn't found anybody and I resigned myself to my fate."

Cultivated and unfailingly courteous, Campbell Dixon took his job as a film critic seriously without abandoning other allegiances—to literature, the theatre, travel. He published a book in 1959 about Venice and other Italian cities; he wrote several plays, one of which, *Isle of Escape*, was filmed by Hollywood in the late Twenties. As a critic he was tolerant, except at times of violence on the screen, independent, and highly professional. "How," he said in the *Films and Filming* article, "can you judge *Lust for Life* if you know nothing of the Impressionists or an adaptation of *War and Peace* if you are ignorant of both Tolstoi and history?" His own concern as a critic was with making such connections; he saw it as the critic's duty not merely to seem to be, but to be, a man of culture.

AN

Asian Film Season

PART I

FILMS FROM CHINA

- Aug. 23, 24
NEW STORY OF AN OLD SOLDIER
with Joris Ivens' EARLY SPRING
- Aug. 25, 26
STORM
- Aug. 27, 28
WATER FOR OUR VILLAGE
- Aug. 28, 3 p.m.
A Survey of Chinese Film History
- Aug. 30
THE OLD TEMPLE BELL
- Aug. 31
VICTORY ON THE WATER
- Sep. 1, 2
THE SHOP OF THE LIN FAMILY
- Sep. 3
WOMAN'S PLACE
- Sep. 4
Film Records of the Chinese Theatre
- Sep. 6
THE CONSTANT BEAM
- Sep. 7
CIRCUS LIFE
- Sep. 8, 10
LIN TSE-HSU (The Opium War)

The second part of the Season will be an Indian Week, from November 14 to November 20. The third part of the Asian Season, from December 13 to 18, will include new films from Hong Kong, Indonesia, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Viet-Nam, and the Soviet Republics of Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan. The fourth part of the Season will be a Japanese film survey beginning in January, 1961.

On September 18 and 25, 1960, within two weeks of Ballet Films, (September 13 to 25), a special programme of Asian Dance Films will be shown, including films from China, India, and Indonesia.

AT THE

NATIONAL FILM THEATRE

Correspondence

Tom and Jerry

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—I cannot help feeling that it is perhaps gratuitously solemn to analyse the antics of Tom and Jerry as D. G. Boyle does in your Spring 1960 issue, nor do I see how his postulated still—essentially something out of context—could be a reliable index of the parent cartoon. Nevertheless, since Jerry is, by convention, dumb and Tom almost so (unless one counts his occasional hollow ‘Don’t you believe it!’), I venture to speak for them.

It may be a limitation of my experience, but I have yet to sense an audience-reaction of the kind D. G. Boyle describes. Even if the violence of Tom and Jerry cartoons were not so stylised, so much a matter of slapstick, its outcome is never in doubt. Whatever ordeals Jerry may go through, however much Tom may be battered, up to and including falling literally to pieces, both cat and mouse are reassuringly indestructible. Exactly the same can be said of Sylvester, Tom’s cousin over at Warner’s, and that ineffable prig, Tweetie Pie.

Is revenge really the theme of these cartoons? Few things could be more endearing than Tom’s self-defeating diabolism, few devices less calculated to inspire horror than the perpetual resurrection and physical imperviousness of M-G-M’s cartoon convention. I feel sure that this strangely clinical diagnosis by Mr. Boyle will find no support among those who are critically devoted both to the ribald humour of this series or to the gentle charm of cartoons like *Johann Mouse* and *The Three Mouseketeers*.

Yours faithfully,

LIONEL R. H. GODFREY.

37 Roxburgh Craft,
Lillington,
Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Prix de Beauté

SIR,—I see that the programme in the National Film Theatre’s French Season, which included an extract from *Prix de Beauté* along with films directed by Clair, gave, without comment, renewed currency to the, on the face of it, rather improbable assertion that it was scripted by Clair from a story by Pabst (the credit of the extract makes matters worse by saying it was *directed* by Clair). I can indeed find no written comment on Clair which throws any doubt on the story, so perhaps it may be worth putting on record Clair’s own account of the matter, in answer to a question I asked him a few years ago.

According to him, it all happened this way: a young man came to Pabst with a film story, which Pabst did not like except for the final twist (presumably the shooting of the heroine at the preview of her film), which he thought excellent. He suggested to the writer that the story was more in Clair’s line, and sent him on to Clair, who agreed in liking only the final twist. Clair therefore took over the idea and wrote an entirely new story to lead up to it. Various complications prevented Clair from making the film himself, and the story was shelved for a while until Genina took it over, and promptly had yet another, completely different, script written, retaining only that same final twist and nothing whatever of Clair’s script. So much for the participation of Pabst and Clair in the film, which can perhaps now be safely removed from their respective filmographies.

Yours faithfully,

J. RUSSELL TAYLOR.

22 Sydney Street,
London, S.W.3.

Concrete Jungle

SIR,—A slight, but important inaccuracy by Derek Hill in his article ‘A Writers’ Wave?’ in your Spring edition.

Concrete Jungle was not made by the Stanley Baker–Joseph Losey–Alun Owen company Cambria Films. This story has always been the property of our associate company Merton Park Studios. I suggested Alun Owen as a possible scenarist to Joseph Losey and the producer Jack Greenwood. It is as a result of this collaboration

that we believe something of unique quality (for British films) has been made.

So you see, some glimmer of the importance of the writer has percolated into the street where I live!

Yours faithfully,

DAVID DEUTSCH.

Anglo Amalgamated Film Distributors,
113 Wardour Street,
London, W.1.

Back Numbers

SIR,—Movement to a new home obliges my parting with a collection of film periodicals. I wonder if any readers of SIGHT AND SOUND wish to acquire a sequence of *Picturegoer* from 31st March 1945 to 2nd November, 1957, all in excellent condition. I have also to dispose of a series of SIGHT AND SOUND, beginning in 1945 and coming up to date—72 in all.

All enquiries are welcomed, and every letter will be answered.

Yours faithfully,

RUPERT ALTERSKYE.

57 Denison Road,
Pocklington,
York.

RENOIR AND REALISM

continued from page 135

embracing in silent close-up against a black background and the noise of singers at the wedding reception, until a flickering, darkening fade-out draws a tactful veil over their acute misery; more often, it is likely to be an exterior—Marie silently rowing into the centre of a serene lake, tiny against the water and the sky, then standing up in the boat . . . and it is here, inevitably, that Renoir will cut away from her to the two men debating in the swaying reeds. Throughout, in fact, one senses that compassion lacking in *Greed*, and that aesthetic discipline lacking in the unvarying, true-to-life narrative logic of *La Terra Trema*, which give *Toni* the unique place in the development of cinematic realism which only time can define.

6

Whether Renoir could or would have made *Toni* after *Monsieur Lange* is one of those fascinating, academic questions posed by all richly erratic careers. To do so, he would have had to reject some powerful elements: the whole folklore of the French filmic tradition, its romantic dockside pessimism and synthetically adult view of human relationships. Certainly Visconti’s break-through would have been made that much more difficult and different. Renoir himself, except perhaps in *The Southerner*, never again attempted a purely realist work on the plane of *Toni*. By 1939, under the threat of war and after two unsuccessful attempts (*Les Bas-Fonds*, *La Bête Humaine*) to come to terms with a cinema seemingly appropriated by Carné and Prévert, he had turned a completely new corner in his career. *La Règle du Jeu*, with its *commedia dell’arte* fringe overflowing into defiantly unsynchronised acting and narrative, its apparently total change of style, pace and theme, found Renoir turning his back on Zolaism for good and inventing a new *genre* altogether. But though the means were different, the end was the same—a final unveiling and the moment of truth. *La Règle du Jeu* was a masterpiece, and so for years had to suffer the reputation of being another Renoir *film maudit*. And yet so it always is with artists whose ultimate end, whatever the terms and labels of the means, is truth. They are reviled, like Renoir for *La Chienne* and *Toni*, like Zola by Ferdinand Brunetière, for their ‘brutal’ style, their ‘ignoble’ preoccupations, for daring to go ‘further than all other realists.’ But they leave their mark, and time has a way of restoring them when, because of them, so many things have changed.

I am indebted to the special Renoir number of *Cahiers du Cinéma* (No 78, published in December, 1957) for the biographical details contained in this article.—P.J.D.

SHORT—OR DOCUMENTARY

continued from page 138

afford a camera, let's do something with it." It is the camera, nothing else, to which these film-makers respond. And how is one to react to their work except with the now habitual "so what?"

There were many awards at Oberhausen: cash and diplomas, Mentions of Honour, prizes from wealthy local organisations. The Jury, headed by Dr. Grierson, distributed them all; and they went, as might be expected, mainly to polished, unexceptionable, sure-fire successes (*Des Hommes dans le Ciel*, *Symphony of Steel*, *Skyscraper*) as well as to such 'arty' aberrations as *Walk in the Old City of Warsaw* and *Praise the Sea*. To crown the evening, the Jury announced its firm conviction of "the high standard of film production throughout the world."

It was, I felt, a statement painfully out of place, a ratification of everything impersonal and half-hearted we had experienced, an under-estimation of documentary as Grierson's own classic phrase, "the creative treatment of reality", defined it. Six of the ten main awards went to animated films, some of them well qualified for a prize. But this high proportion in itself points to the shortage of films of another kind: the personal, social documentaries on which the short-film genre did, and I feel "Working Film Days" should, basically, rely. It is not merely the length of a film which should determine the character of programmes of this sort, just as it is not the width of the film gauge which ultimately reveals who is an "amateur" and who is not. A recent article in *Cahiers du Cinéma* declared: "no director should begin to make short films without having listed 87 general ideas." To that, one could add some further requisites. The unspoken statement of the Oberhausen festival was that there is nothing much left to be discovered in the world. And that is something we can hardly shrug off; for there is still a strong need to "cultivate our garden".

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PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *A Breath of Scandal*.
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UNITED ARTISTS for *The Apartment*, *The Chaplin Revue*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *All the Fine Young Cannibals*.
COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Suddenly*, *Last Summer*, *Murder by Contract*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Conscience Bay*.
BRITISH LION for *The Man Upstairs*.
EROS FILMS for *The Trials of Oscar Wilde*.
HILLCREST PRODUCTIONS for *Jazz on a Summer's Day*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Come Back Africa*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Le Testament d'Orphée*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *La Chienne*, *Toni*, *La Fille de l'Eau*, *Boudou Sauvé des Eaux*, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange*, *Camille*, *Hamlet*, *Masks and Faces*, *Cenere*, *La Dame aux Camélias*.
NEW REALM for *La Bête Humaine*.
UNITALIA FILM for *La Notte Brava*, *I Magliari*, *La Lunga Notte del '43*, *Estate Violenta*.
OLMEC PRODUCTIONS for *The Young One*.
CINE DEL DUCA for *L'Avventura*.
PLAYART-FILMS ONOR-TITANUS for *Le Trou*.
COCINOR for *Les Jeux de l'Amour*.
FILMS 59 for *Los Golfos*.
SOVEXPORTFILM for *The Lady with the Dog*.
RIAMA-PATHE for *La Dolce Vita*.
FILMS MARCEAU-COCINOR-TITANUS for *Rocco and his Brothers*.
HERMAN VAN DER HORST for *Praise the Sea*.
BURSTYN FILM ENTERPRISES for *Skyscraper*.
ROBERT SNYDER for *A Visit to Pablo Casals*.
CATONE RAMELDO for *1958*.
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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two or three stars

ALL THE FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS (M-G-M) Dim teenage sortie into Crawford-Davis territory, fitfully illuminated by Pearl Bailey's appearances as an alcoholic Negro blues singer. (Robert Wagner, Natalie Wood, Susan Kohner, George Hamilton; director, Michael Anderson. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

***BEN-HUR** (M-G-M) Out of 5 years' preparation, 6½ months' shooting at Cinecittà, 40,000 tons of sand and a sea of blood and Camera 65 celluloid, director William Wyler has fished a memorable 9-minute chariot race, some Victorian scripture-book frescoes and an unexpectedly forceful Messala from Stephen Boyd. (Charlton Heston, Jack Hawkins, Hugh Griffith, Haya Harareet. Technicolor, Panavision.)

BIG FISHERMAN, THE (Disney) Whirlwinds, sumptuous orgies, temptresses ("You thrill my inmost being," Herodias murmurs to Herod Antipas), the beheading of John the Baptist—all in a 70 mm. Panavision, Technicolor, stereophonic version of the novel its author, Lloyd C. Douglas, once described as "tiresomely decent." (Howard Keel, Susan Kohner, John Saxon, Herbert Lom; director, Frank Borzage.)

***BLACK ORPHEUS** (R. D. Purie/Carzon) Marcel Camus's 1959 Cannes prizewinner. A modern version of the Orpheus story, set in Rio de Janeiro with lashings of carnival, but uneasy in its blend of spectacle, myth and melodrama. (Marpessa Dawn, Breno Mello. Eastman Colour.)

CAMP OF VIOLENCE (Gala) Spain's belated answer to *I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, doubtless authentic in its sources, but unconvincing in its telling, its American backgrounds and as a casebook study of a sadist. (Richard Morse, Adolfo Marsillach; director, Jose Maria Forque.)

CAN-CAN (Fox) Mercilessly over-played and overstuffed version of Cole Porter's 1953 musical, made worse by tired singing and a hideous Adam and Eve ballet. (Shirley MacLaine, Frank Sinatra, Maurice Chevalier, Louis Jourdan; director, Walter Lang. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

*****CHAPLIN REVUE, THE** (United Artists) *A Dog's Life*, *Shoulder Arms* and *The Pilgrim* done up into a package and briefly introduced by Chaplin himself. The cuts are minute, and it is as if we were suddenly allowed to hear the actuality of Caruso after knowing him only through dimness and scratches. Reviewed.

CIRCUS OF HORRORS (Anglo Amalgamated) Plastic surgeon acquires derelict circus, staffs it with criminals whose faces he has tampered with, arranges fatal "accidents" for any defaulters. A masterpiece of monotony. (Anton Diffring, Donald Pleasence, Kenneth Griffith; director, Sidney Hayers. Eastman Colour.)

CRACK IN THE MIRROR (Fox) Murder and courtroom melodrama set in Paris, with the three stars—for no reason that one can see—each playing two parts: difficult to follow, impossible to believe. (Orson Welles, Juliette Greco, Bradford Dillman; director, Richard Fleischer. CinemaScope.)

FIVE BRANDED WOMEN (Paramount) Namely five victims of Yugoslav partisan retaliation during the last war. The major interest in Martin Ritt's co-production, made for Dino DeLaurentiis in Italy and Austria, seems to lie in watching whose hair grows back the quickest. Silvana Mangano's does. (Van Heflin, Barbara Bel Geddes, Jeanne Moreau, Vera Miles.)

FLESH AND THE FIENDS, THE (Regal International) Gratuitously gruesome account of the Burke and Hare business, tricked out with love interest and a prostitute. Makes one pine for Karloff and Val Lewton, who did it all years ago with so much more nicety. (Peter Cushing, Donald Pleasence, George Rose; director, John Gilling. DylaScope.)

***FUGITIVE KIND, THE** (United Artists) Solemnly embalmed version of Tennessee Williams' over-written play *Orpheus Descending*, distinguished by Boris Kaufman's photography and Marlon Brando's gift for luminous silences. (Anna Magnani, Joanne Woodward; director, Sidney Lumet.) Reviewed.

*****GENERATION, A** (Contemporary) Andrzej Wajda's first (1954) and best film, a youthful story of partisan resistance to the Germans, set against the charred bones of Warsaw and inspired by an impulsive mixture of idealism and romantic gallantry. (Tadeusz Lomnicki, Urszula Modrzynska, Tadeusz Janczar.)

***GRANDES FAMILLES, LES** (Cross-Channel) Rambling, wordy but polished story of high finance skulduggery in one of France's top industrial families. Fine acting by Jean Gabin, Pierre Brasseur, Jean Desailly and Bernard Blier. (Director, Denys de La Patellière.)

***HOME FROM THE HILL** (M-G-M) Florid family saga of two generations' involved and illicit affairs in the Deep South. Biblical overtones, a feverish climax in Minnelli's latest manner, and a redeeming, natural performance by George Peppard. (Robert Mitchum, George Hamilton, Eleanor Parker. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

***INHERIT THE WIND** (United Artists) Stanley Kramer's reconstruction of the famous Tennessee "Monkey Trial" provides marvellous opportunities for opposing attorneys Spencer Tracy (Darwin's disciple) and Fredric March (spokesman for God). Impassioned courtroom theatricals, a display of liberal intentions and some false emotionalism. (Gene Kelly, Florence Eldridge.) Reviewed.

KIDNAPPED (Disney) Well-cast and reasonably faithful adaptation of Stevenson's classic, with stirring Scottish locations but otherwise not a great deal of excitement. (James MacArthur, Peter Finch, Bernard Lee, John Laurie; director, Robert Stevenson.)

LIGHT UP THE SKY (Bryanston/British Lion) Laughter and tears with a searchlight unit; a compendium of clichés, based on the play *Touch it Light*, performed in as many styles as there are characters. (Ian Carmichael, Benny Hill, Tommy Steele; director, Lewis Gilbert.)

LI'L ABNER (Paramount) Synthetic musical from the stage version of Al Capp's comic strip, famous for its injection of political satire into the insane logic of hillbilly folk-lore. The film injects thin Broadway tunes into a galloping story and almost lames it. (Peter Palmer, Leslie Parrish, Howard St. John; director, Melvin Frank. Technicolor, VistaVision.)

****MURDER BY CONTRACT** (Columbia) Ice-cold case history of a young man who murders for profit, and an excellent example of low-budget American film-making. (Vince Edwards, Phillip Pine, Herschel Bernardi; director, Irving Lerner.) Reviewed.

NEVER LET GO (Rank) Salesman Richard Todd, one of life's near-failures, carries on a one-man war against a gang of car-thieves, led by an unconvincingly psychopathic Peter Sellers; excessive dwelling on violence leads to apathy, disbelief and a uniquely grotesque climax. (Adam Faith, Elizabeth Sellars; director, John Guillermin.)

NEVER TAKE SWEETS FROM A STRANGER (Columbia) Nasty old gentleman protected by corruption in a small Canadian township proceeds to rape and child-murder. A tricky enough subject further handicapped by skimpy writing and undisciplined performance. (Felix Aylmer, Patrick Allen, Gwen Watford; director, Cyril Frankel. MegaScope.)

***RIFI AND THE WOMEN** (Regal International) Sour account of gang warfare on the Brussels quais, with night-club queens, ageing underworld czars, counterfeit printing and bank robbery to the fore. Artificial, but slickly done and gripping. (Nadja Tiller, Robert Hossein, Silvia Monfort, Pierre Blanchard, Françoise Rosay; director, Alex Joffé.)

SAVAGE INNOCENTS, THE (Rank) Or Nanook of the Home Counties. Anthony Quinn and Yoko Tani at Pinewood in a drama of love and death among the Polar Eskimos, by means of back transparencies, fancy cutting, etc. Good photography from the second unit. (Director, Nicholas Ray. Technicolor, Technirama-70.)

***SERGEANT RUTLEDGE** (Warner-Pathé) John Ford Western, with elements of self-parody, about a Negro cavalryman on trial for rape and murder. Sometimes impressive, but generally under-rehearsed and given over to arty tableaux, repetitive comedy and shock tactics. (Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers, Woody Strode, Willis Bouchee. Technicolor.) Reviewed.

***SONS AND LOVERS** (Fox) Cautious version of the D.H. Lawrence novel, pleasant enough as a series of pictures of Edwardian working class life, often beautifully photographed, but far from the original in spirit. (Dean Stockwell, Trevor Howard, Wendy Hiller, Mary Ure; director, Jack Cardiff. CinemaScope.) Reviewed.

SOUTH PACIFIC (Fox) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage musical, stodgily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle décor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr. Technicolor, Todd-AO.)

SOUTH SEAS ADVENTURE (Cinerama) Two girls voyage from Los Angeles to Honolulu, taking in surf-riding, Tahiti, Queen Salote's tortoise, Fiji, manhood initiation rites in the New Hebrides, Maoris and Bondi Beach lifeguards. One or two pretty views barely compensate for the sense of strain. (Commentary by Orson Welles; various directors. Technicolor, Cinerama.)

SUBTERRANEANS, THE (M-G-M) Leslie Caron and George Peppard cruelly wasted on a silly, psychotically trimmed novelette about the "new bohemians" of San Francisco's North Beach area. (Janice Rule, Roddy McDowall; director, Randal MacDougall. Metrocolor, CinemaScope.)

SUDDENLY, LAST SUMMER (Columbia) Tennessee Williams's one-act catalogue of perversions, spun out by forty minutes, still leads up to cannibalism as a symbolic revelation of the face of God, but is otherwise more notable for its hokum than its horror. Katharine Hepburn manages to convey a hint of the original's elegant depravity, however. (Elizabeth Taylor, Montgomery Clift; director, Joseph L. Mankiewicz.)

TALL STORY (Warner-Pathé) Mild campus farce, uninventively handled by Joshua Logan, with newcomer Jane Fonda using college as a marriage bureau, Anthony Perkins as her gauche and gangling quarry in the basket-ball team. (Ray Walston, Marc Connelly.)

****TESTAMENT D'ORPHEE, LE** (Gala) This friendly, candid and often haunting dream-film is the last of Cocteau's legacies to the cinema. Starring, written and directed by the conjuror himself, with a crowd of well-wishers (Picasso, Lifar, Marais, Périer, Casarès, Gélén, Edouard Dermit, Yul Brynner) to wave him good-bye. Reviewed.

***UNFORGIVEN, THE** (United Artists) John Huston's visually admirable attempt to design and execute an heroic Western lacks the narrative gift and essential interior resource that a refurbished legend needs. (Audrey Hepburn, Burt Lancaster, Audie Murphy, Lillian Gish. Technicolor. Panavision.) Reviewed.

***VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** (M-G-M) Genuinely frightening adaptation of John Wyndham's *The Midwich Cuckoos*, and possibly the nearest S-F film yet to have come out of a British studio. (George Sanders, Barbara Shelley, Michael Gwynn; director, Wolf Rilla.)



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